

MAN IN BLACK

INTEGRALE 1957-1958

BIBLIOTHECA VIRTUALIS



PAWNS IN THE
HANDS OF FATE!



et homme en noir n'a rien à voir avec ceux que le cinéma a popularisé. Ce personnage, malgré sa coiffure méphistophélique, n'est rien d'autre que le destin. Il est bien sûr malicieux et a pour le seconder Vénus la déesse de l'Amour et la Tisserande, de fait l'une des Parques qui tisse le destin des hommes.

Dans ces histoires Vénus interviendra finalement assez peu, on verra davantage Eros; en revanche la Tisserande sera bien plus présente.

A proprement parler il ne s'agit pas d'histoires d'horreur, ni même fantastiques mais elles empruntent beaucoup au genre présent dans les comics. Tout d'abord les histoires bénéficient d'un hôte. On l'a vu maintes fois, que ce soit le Gardien de la Crypte, Oncle Creepy, Boris Karloff, Dr Spektor ou plus récemment Vincent Price. Toutes se terminent par un retournement de situation et toutes comportent une morale finale ou une mise au point historique.

En effet, plusieurs de ces récits sont basés sur des événements réels avec des personnages fictifs: Pompéi, le Hindenburg, Little Big Horn. Quelques autres relatent d'authentiques épisodes comme ceux de Roland Garros ou d'Esopé. A chaque fois bien sûr le destin inverse les choses.

À cela se greffent bien sûr des fictions mais toujours dans le même état d'esprit. C'est assurément plaisant. La conception de l'ensemble promettait de jolies promenades dans l'espace et le temps. Il n'en a rien été, l'aventure s'est terminée au bout de quatre numéros.

Voici les histoires dans leur intégralité. J'ai bien conscience que les retouches ne sont pas parfaites mais je tiens à préciser que les originaux étaient vraiment dans un sale état.

Mais c'était sans doute leur destin !

Garches, le 4 novembre 2020



GREETINGS! I AM THE MAN IN BLACK! SOME CALL ME FATE... SOME KISMET... AND OTHERS LUCK! BUT TO YOU, I AM THE MAN IN BLACK! AND I WILL SHOW YOU THE AMAZING PART I PLAY IN YOUR LIFE! THESE TWO LOVELY LADIES ARE VENUS, THE GODDESS OF LOVE, AND THE WEAVER... SHE WHO WEAVES THE PATTERNS OF LIFE!

STOP YAKKING, M.B.! AND STEP INTO THAT LITTLE BIT GOING ON BELOW... BEFORE VENUS POKES HER PRETTY NOSE INTO IT AND REALLY GUMS IT UP!

OH! WHAT I COULD DO HERE!

IF I FAIL TO SPLIT THE DIAMOND PERFECTLY, THE MOGUL WILL HAVE MY HEAD!

I-- I CANNOT! I AM TOO OLD... TOO UNSTEADY!

AND THEN FATE STEPPED IN AND TIPPED THE MALLET...

HUH? A PERFECT SPLIT!!

AND SO BY MERE "ACCIDENT," THIS DIAMOND CUTTER BECAME A HERO INSTEAD OF A LOST SOUL! BUT THE WAYS OF FATE ARE MANY, AND NOT ALWAYS SO HAPPY TO VIEW! COME ALONG AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!

MAN in BLACK

SOME PEOPLE ACCEPT THEIR FATE... SOME BATTLE IT... AND OTHERS TRYING TO SHAPE IT TO THEIR OWN ENDS ONLY SEAL IT WITH THEIR DOWNFALL! TAKE FOR EXAMPLE OUR ARTIST FRIEND, PAUL PRENZ!

MAN in BLACK BRUSH STROKES

PAUL! PAUL, WHY DO YOU DESTROY THE PAINTING?!



WHY NOT?! WOULD ANYONE BUY IT? WOULD YOU, MAX? AS AN ART DEALER, YOU SHUDDER AT THE THOUGHT, EH? YOU THINK MY WORK IS TRASH!

NOT TRASH, PAUL! IT'S GOOD COMMERCIAL WORK! BUT IT'S NOT ART, EITHER!

GOOD! COMMERCIAL! MEDIOCRE! WHY?! WHY HAS FATE ORDAINED ME TO WALLOW IN MEDIOCRITY?! YOU! FATE! WHY DIDN'T YOU CHOOSE ME TO PAINT THE GREATEST PICTURE OF ALL TIME?! I CAN DO IT! MAKE ME THE ONE TO PAINT THE BEST!

BAH! YOU NEVER WILL!

DID YOU HEAR HIM? NOT JUST A GOOD PAINTING... THE GREATEST! GREEDY LITTLE MAN! SUPPOSE HE GOT HIS PRECIOUS WISH. LET'S SEE WHAT HAPPENS!





COME ALONG! LET'S GET STARTED!

HUH? I FEEL AS IF SOMEBODY... SOMETHING WAS FORCING ME TO PAINT!



"... AND PAINT PAUL PRENZ DID! FOR AN HOUR THE TREMENDOUS IMPULSE URGED HIM ON AND ON..."

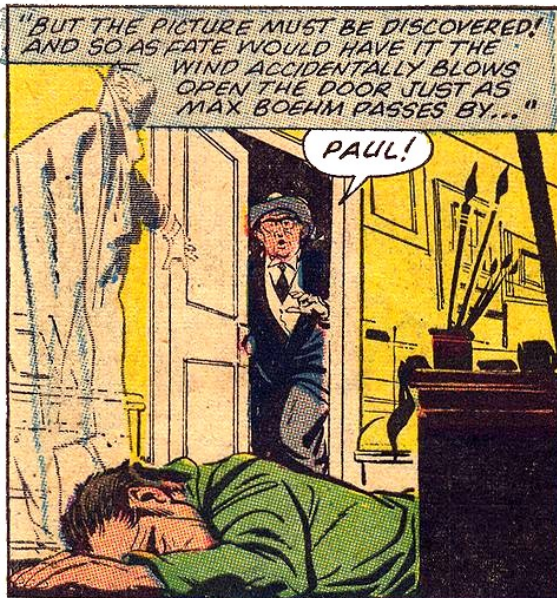
NOW WHAT MADE ME PUT THAT STROKE THERE?! HUH!-- LOOKS BETTER TOO!

OF COURSE!



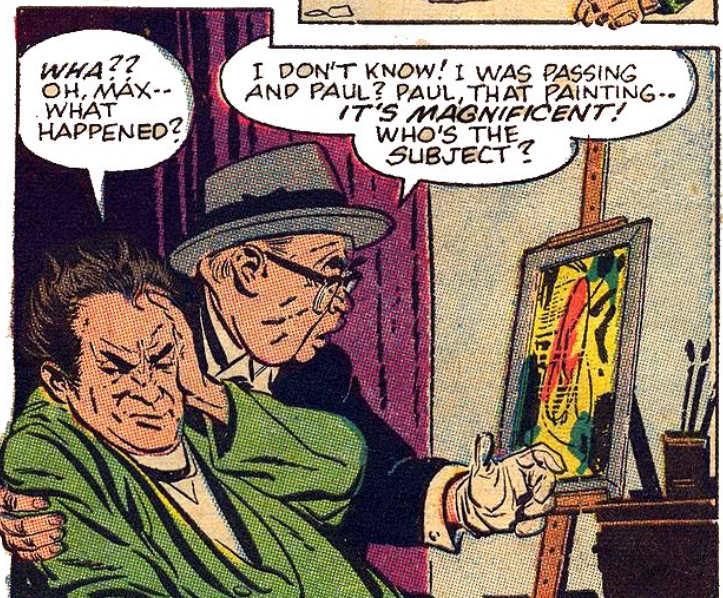
"FINALLY, PAUL FELL... EXHAUSTED."

HE FINALLY DOES ONE GOOD JOB AND HE PASSES OUT! REALLY, SOMETIMES FATE'S IRONY BORES ME!



"BUT THE PICTURE MUST BE DISCOVERED! AND SO AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT THE WIND ACCIDENTALLY BLOWS OPEN THE DOOR JUST AS MAX BOEHM PASSES BY..."

PAUL!



WHA?? OH, MAX-- WHAT HAPPENED?

I DON'T KNOW! I WAS PASSING AND PAUL? PAUL, THAT PAINTING-- IT'S MAGNIFICENT! WHO'S THE SUBJECT?



I DON'T KNOW... I HARDLY REMEMBER PAINTING IT!

DON'T KNOW?! PAUL! STOP MAKING THE JOKES! IN FORTY YEARS A FINER WORK I HAVE NEVER SEEN! IT IS SUPERB! THE GREATEST PAINTING EVER AND YOU DON'T KNOW THE SUBJECT!!



OH, STOP RAVING, MAX! IT CAN'T BE THAT GOOD!

BUT IT IS!... IS!! YES, I'M RAVING... LIKE EVERYBODY WILL BE RAVING! PAUL, I TELL YOU THIS IS THE GREATEST PICTURE EVER DONE! YOU'LL SEE! I WILL PROVE IT!

"ASTUTE SHOWMAN THAT HE WAS, MAX BOEHM EXHIBITED THE PAINTING TO ITS BEST ADVANTAGE AND IN A MERE FEW WEEKS THE 'CYTHEREA' AS IT WAS CALLED, BECAME THE MOST FAMOUS PAINTING IN THE WORLD.

AND PAUL PRENZ WAS SWEEPED ALONG IN ITS GLORY... BEWILDERED AT FIRST, THEN AMUSED AND FINALLY SWEEPED OFF HIS FEET IN THE MAD, HEADY WHIRLPOOL OF ADULATION!"



"SELLING THE 'CYTHEREA' FOR A SMALL FORTUNE, PAUL LIVED HIGH, FREELY THROWING HIS MONEY DOWN THE DRAIN OF A GOOD TIME..."



WHAT, PAUL, YOU'RE PAINTING?

YES, I NEED SOME CASH, SO I THOUGHT I'D WHIP OUT A PAINTING!

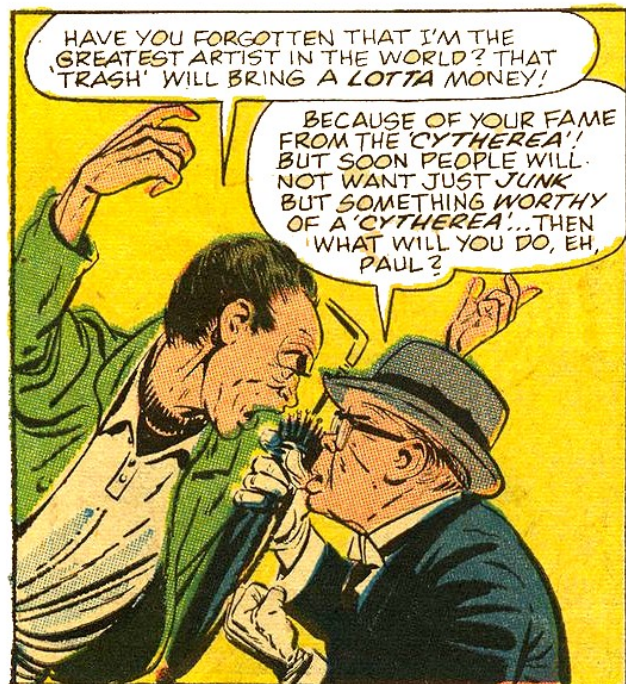
THIS YOU CALL A PAINTING? THIS BY THE CREATOR OF THE 'CYTHEREA'? THIS IS TRASH! WORTHLESS!

WHA--?!



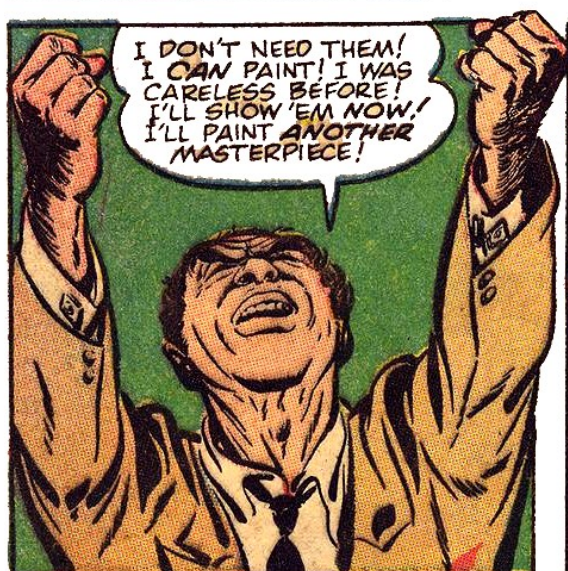
HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN THAT I'M THE GREATEST ARTIST IN THE WORLD? THAT 'TRASH' WILL BRING A LOTTA MONEY!

BECAUSE OF YOUR FAME FROM THE 'CYTHEREA'! BUT SOON PEOPLE WILL NOT WANT JUST JUNK BUT SOMETHING WORTHY OF A 'CYTHEREA'... THEN WHAT WILL YOU DO, EH, PAUL?



"BUT POMPOUS, CONCEITED PAUL KEPT TOSSING HIS MONEY AWAY, SELLING A PAINTING NOW AND THEN. BUT LIKE MAX PREDICTED, SOON NOBODY WANTED ANYTHING LESS THAN A 'CYTHEREA'!"







"PAUL TRIED EVERYWHERE, BUT NO ONE WOULD BUY ANYTHING OF LESS CALIBRE THAN THE 'CYTHEREA'... AND THEN THERE WAS ONLY ONE PLACE LEFT TO GO!"

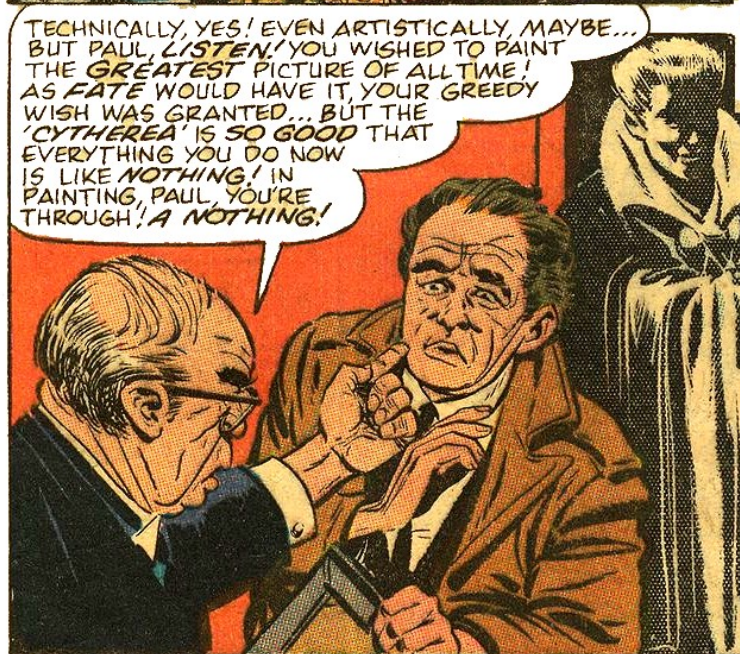
MAX, I CAME TO APOLOGIZE... AND TO... TO BEG HELP!

PAUL PRENZ! HELP, EH? LET'S SEE WHAT YOU HAVE?



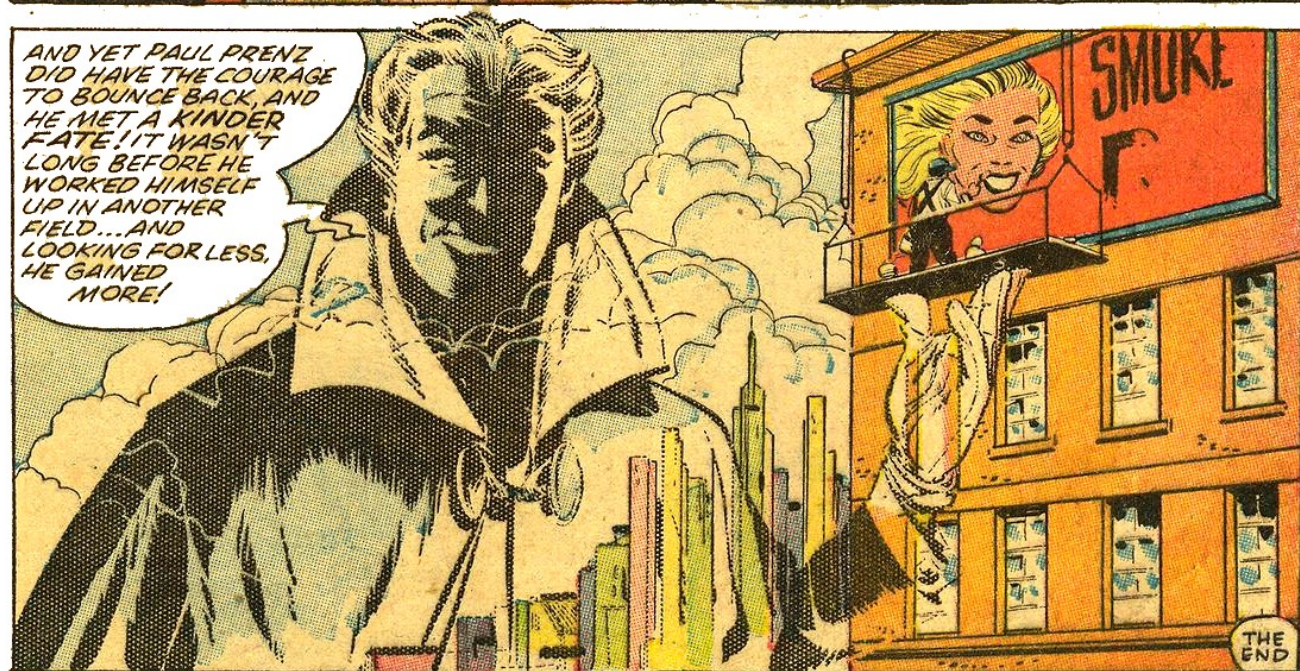
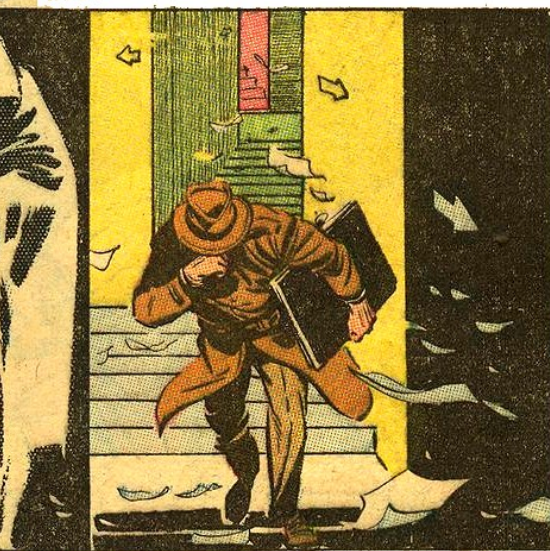
HMM, MAYBE I COULD SELL IT AS A CURIOSITY... BUT AS A PAINTING... PAUL, IT'S NOT GOOD ENOUGH!

BUT WHY, MAX? WHY IS IT NO GOOD?! TECHNICALLY IT'S...



TECHNICALLY, YES! EVEN ARTISTICALLY, MAYBE... BUT PAUL, LISTEN! YOU WISHED TO PAINT THE GREATEST PICTURE OF ALL TIME! AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, YOUR GREEDY WISH WAS GRANTED... BUT THE 'CYTHEREA' IS SO GOOD THAT EVERYTHING YOU DO NOW IS LIKE NOTHING! IN PAINTING, PAUL, YOU'RE THROUGH! A NOTHING!

"NOW CAN YOU UNDERSTAND WHY FATE'S IRONY IS SOMETIMES DOWNRIGHT TEDIOUS! IT GRANTS SOME POOR JOKER SUCH GREAT SUCCESS THAT IT RUINS HIM!"



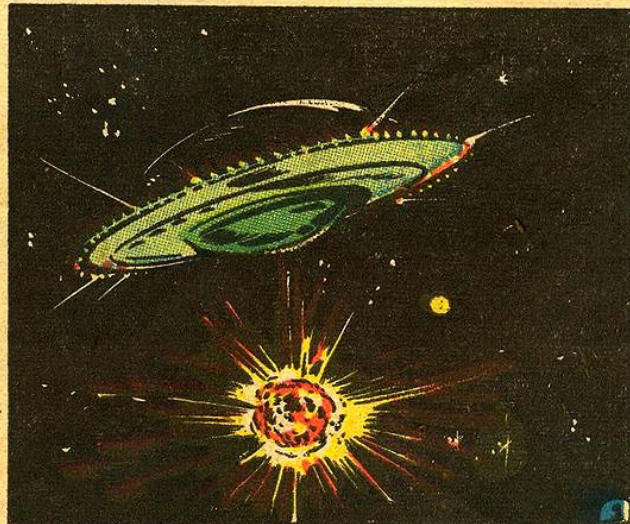
AND YET PAUL PRENZ DID HAVE THE COURAGE TO BOUNCE BACK, AND HE MET A KINDER FATE! IT WASN'T LONG BEFORE HE WORKED HIMSELF UP IN ANOTHER FIELD... AND LOOKING FOR LESS, HE GAINED MORE!

THE END

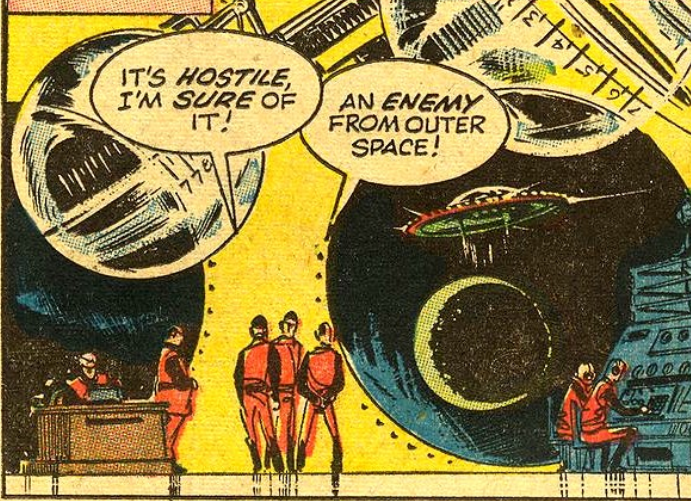
SECOND CHANCE



...BUT ALAS! THE POOR HARRIED CRYPTOGRAPHER NEVER FINISHED HIS STATEMENT, FOR THE INVADERS, TECHNOLOGICALLY FAR ADVANCED OF EARTH, UNLOOSED THEIR OWN MIGHTY WEAPONS AT THE WORLD'S FIRST SALVO AND DESTROYED IT ALL...



BUT LET'S TAKE ANOTHER LOOK AT THIS SCENE, AND SEE WHAT WOULD HAVE HAPPENED IF FATE HAD GIVEN THEM A **SECOND CHANCE**...AND THEY HAD ACTED DIFFERENTLY...



IT JUST KEEPS SENDING THOSE UNINTELLIGIBLE SIGNALS! CRYPTOGRAPHER, HAVE YOU DECIPHERED THEIR MESSAGE YET?

ALMOST THRU, SIR!



AS FAST AS YOU CAN, BUT MAKE SURE IT'S CORRECT!

I HAVE IT NOW, SIR!



IT'S THE SAME MESSAGE OVER AND OVER, SIR... HERE, I'LL TYPE IT OUT!

GOOD WORK!



AS I FEARED! HOSTILE! LOOK! READ IT!

"DECEIVE US AND WE WILL DESCEND ON YOU!" "HMM! IT DOES SOUND..."



'SCUSE ME, SIR! THE MESSAGE READS WRONG! MAY I SEE IT?

HERE... BUT HURRY! WE SHOULD ATTACK BEFORE THEY DO!

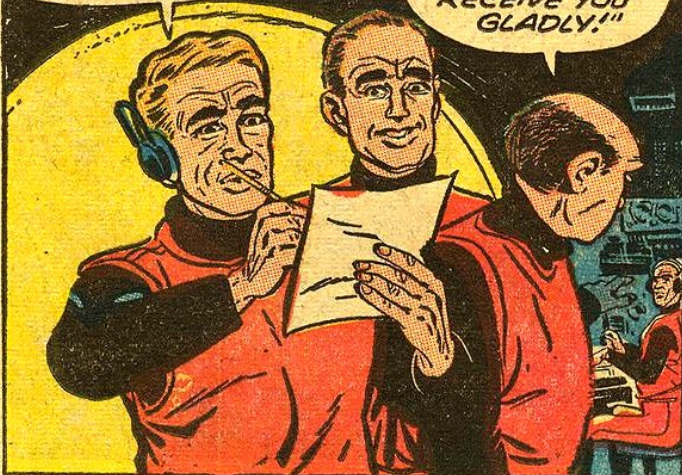


GOOD GRIEF! I PUNCHED THE **WRONG** TYPEWRITER KEY! HERE, SIR, THE MESSAGE SHOULD READ THIS WAY!

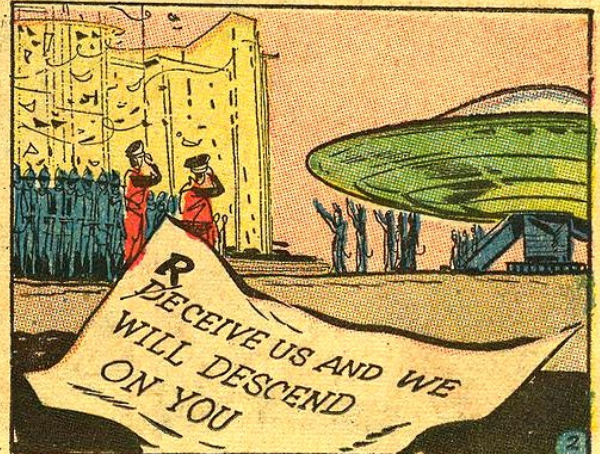
WELL! THAT IS DIFFERENT- THIS SOUNDS FRIENDLY!

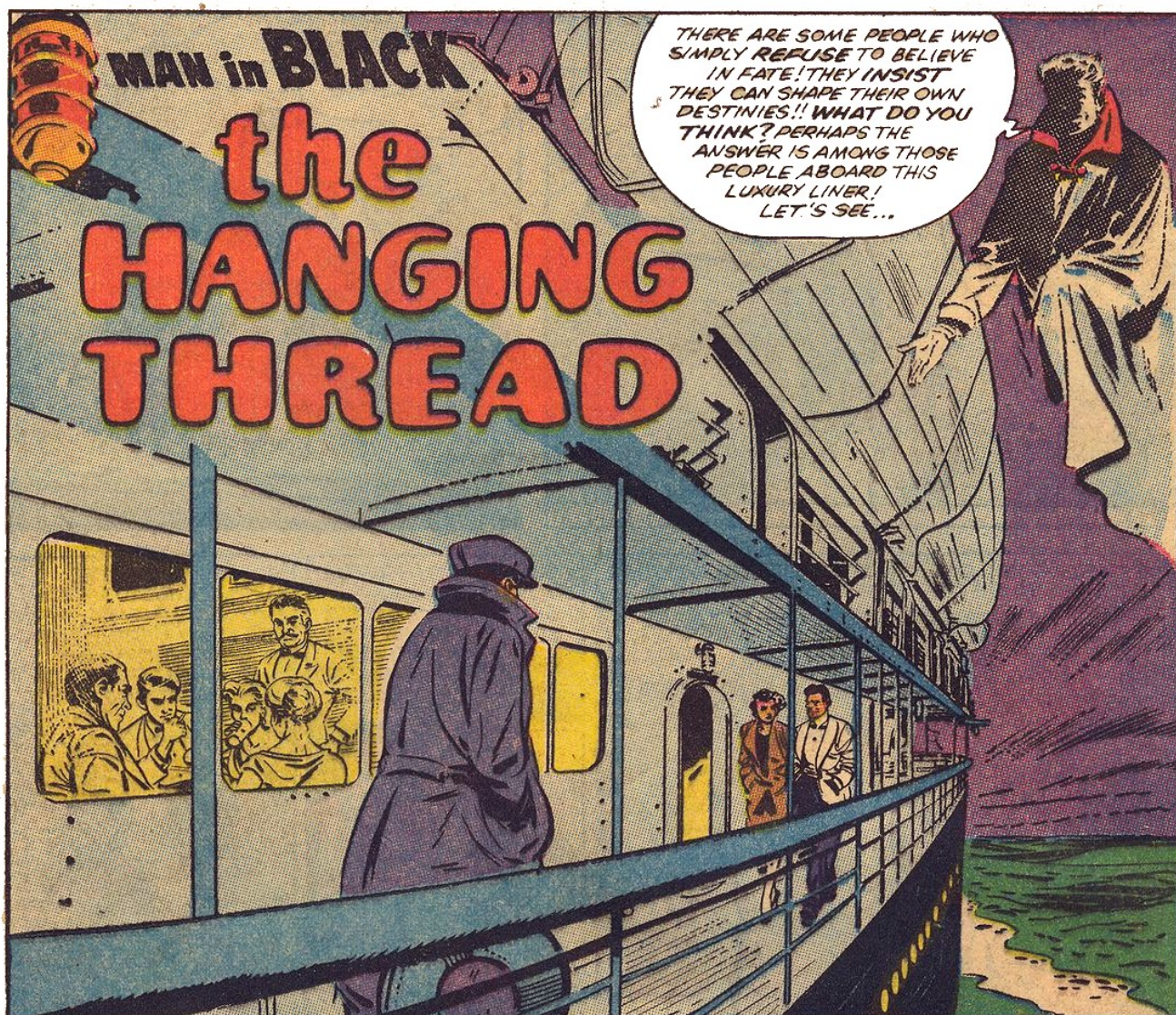
YES! VERY DEFINITELY!

RADIO MAN, SEND THIS REPLY... "WE RECEIVE YOU GLADLY!"



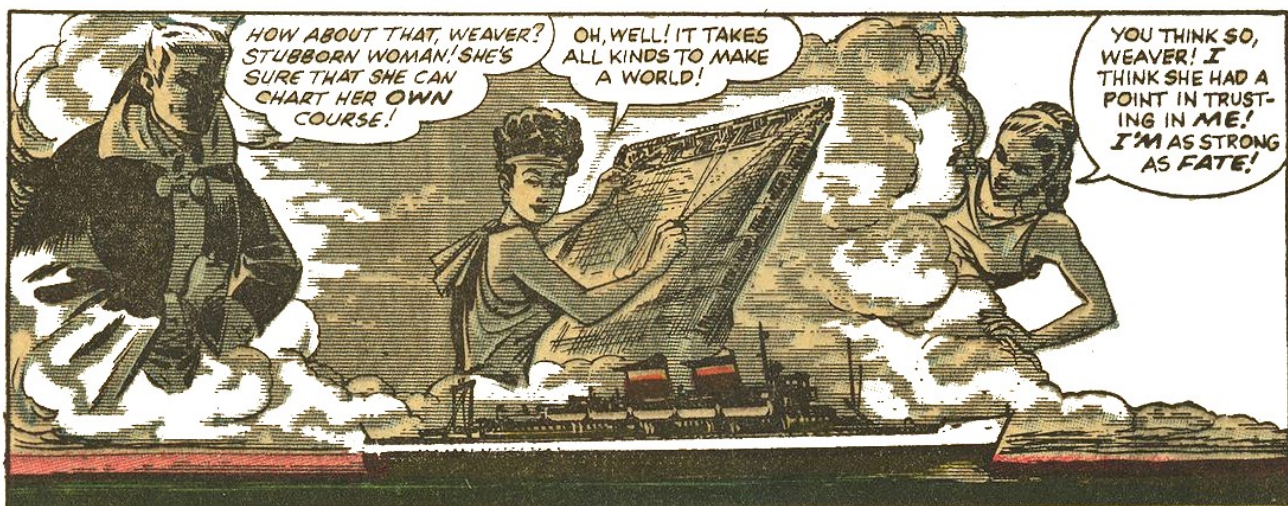
AND THUS A GLORIOUS NEW ERA OF COMMUNICATION AND TRADE BEGAN BETWEEN THE PLANETS --AN ERA THAT MIGHT HAVE BEEN DESTROYED (AS YOU SAW) BECAUSE A PANICKED CRYPTOGRAPHER PUSHED A LETTER ON THE SECOND ROW OF A TYPEWRITER WHEN HE SHOULD HAVE PUSHED THE LETTER JUST OVER IT ON THE TOP ROW!





MAN in BLACK the HANGING THREAD









THAT SETTLES THAT!
NOW TO FINISH
UP THIS NASTY
JOB!



WHEN!
I HOPE
I NEVER
HAVE TO
DO THAT
AGAIN!

I THOUGHT YOU
TOOK CARE OF
THAT WOMAN!
LOOK! HERE'S
HER HUSBAND'S
THREAD OF LIFE!
SHE'S STILL
GOT HIM!



YOUR HUSBAND IS A
LITTLE LATE FOR
HIS APPOINTMENT!

I...I'VE
BEEN
EXPECTING
YOU...



THEN YOU KNOW
HE MUST
GO!

MUST HE?!
CAN'T YOU
SEE HOW MUCH
I LOVE
HIM?



I'M SORRY BUT LOVE
IS MEANINGLESS!...
WHEN IT COMES TO
FATE!



AND THEN IT HAPPENED...
AS I REACHED FOR THE
MAN A TEAR DROPPED
ON MY GLOVE!

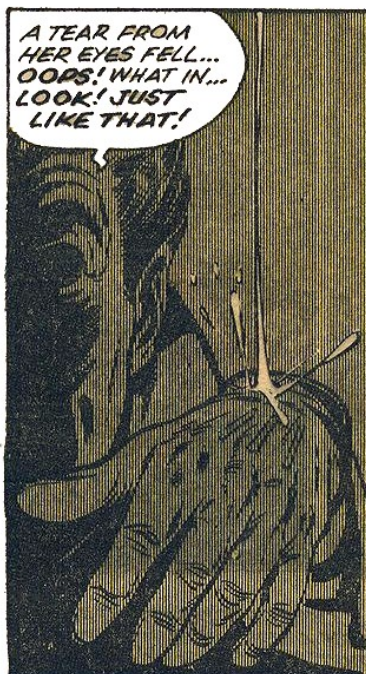
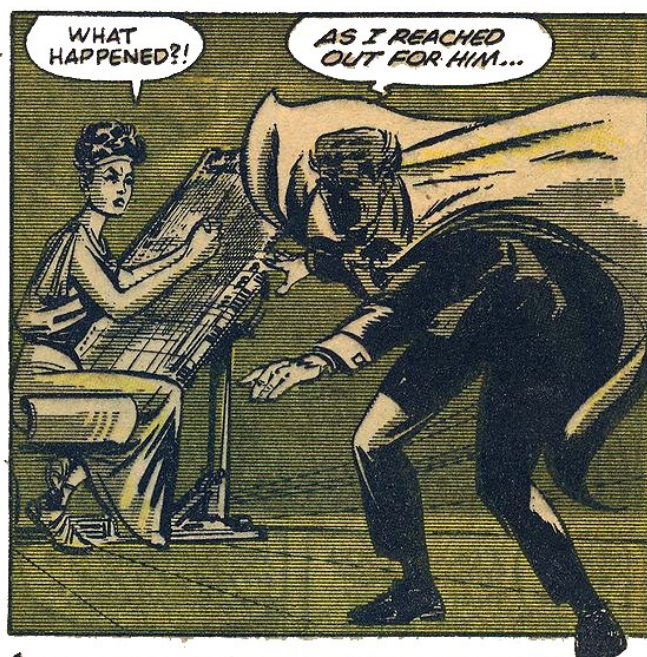
I DREW BACK MY HAND AS IF IT
WERE BURNED, AND STARED AT
IT... A SINGLE, GLISTENING TEAR...
THE EPITOME OF HUMAN SORROW
"THE SYMBOL OF ANGUISH... AND
OF EVERLASTING LOVE!" I FELT
LIKE A HEEL!



I COULDN'T DO IT! I'D FACE
THE MUSIC WITH THE WEAVER
BUT I HAD TO LET HIM GO!

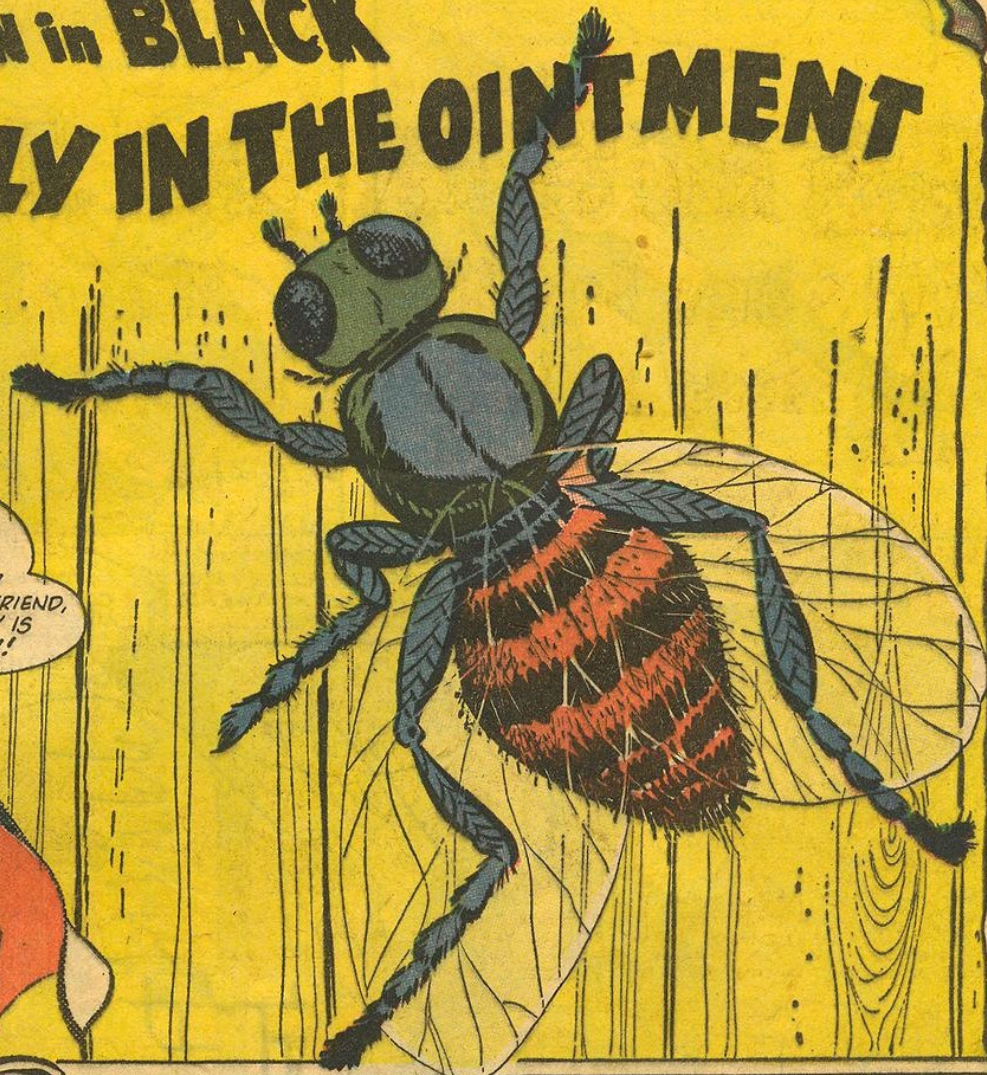


T-THANK
YOU...



MAN in BLACK THE FLY IN THE OINTMENT

DID YOU KNOW THAT A LOWLY, COMMON HOUSE FLY ONCE THWARTED THE COMBINED EFFORTS OF A MIGHTY KING AND HIS WICKED TORTURER? YOU DIDN'T?! -- WELL THEN, FRIEND, THIS STORY IS FOR YOU!



IT ALL HAPPENED LONG AGO WHEN A TRAVELLER NAMED KONI AND HIS SISTER, SINARA, WANDERED INTO THE MAOS CAPITAL OF WONDEROUS GHENJI!

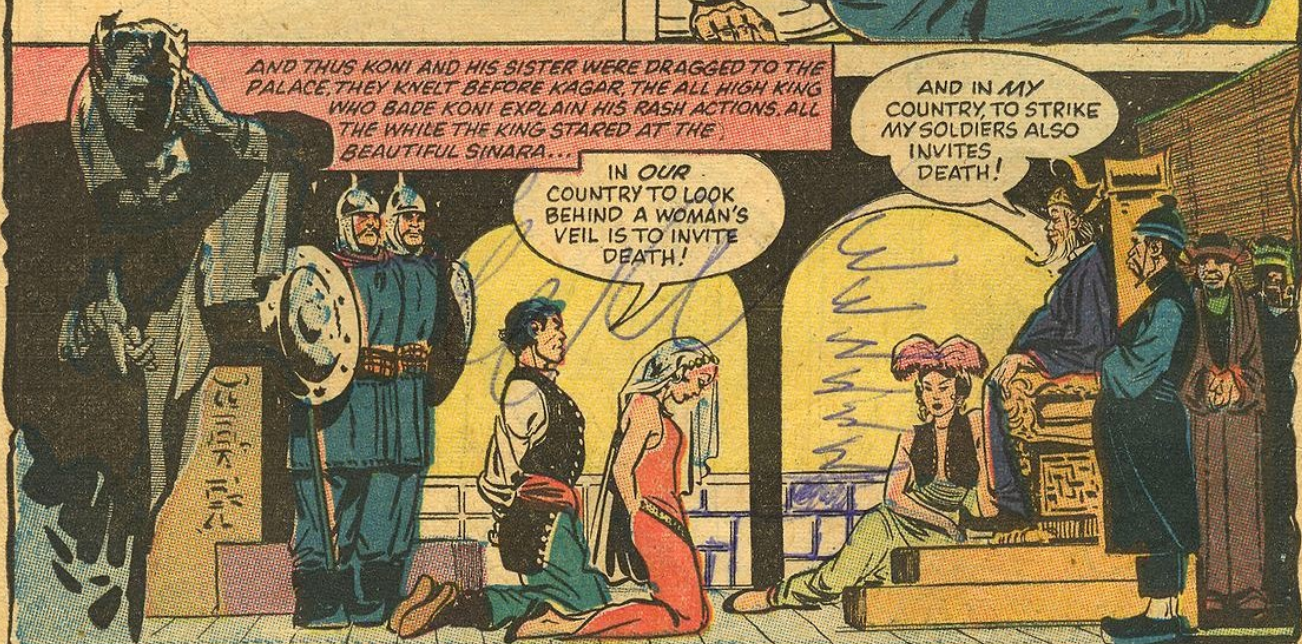


HO! WHAT STRANGERS ARE THESE WHO HIDE THEIR FACES!



YOU LOOK TOO COMELY A DAMSEL TO COVER YOUR FACE! OFF WITH THE VEIL!





AND THAT NIGHT, A WISELY PLACED DINAR BROUGHT SINARA AN AUDIENCE WITH HER BROTHER...



SINARA!

PEACE, BELOVED BROTHER! I HAVE BUT A LITTLE TIME TO TELL YOU GLAD TIDINGS!



NEVER MIND HOW I WILL KNOW, BUT WATCH ME CLOSELY ON THE MORROW! WHICHEVER CHEEK I BRUSH WITH MY HAND WILL BE THE SIDE WITH THE JAR WITH THE JEWEL! NOW I MUST GO! GOOD NIGHT!

YOU GIVE ME NEW LIFE, DEAR SISTER!



AND THEN SINARA KEPT HER TRYST WITH THE EVIL COURTIER WHO LED HER DOWN TO THE SUBTERRANEAN CHAMBERS OF THE MASTER OF THE ORDEALS...



AYE! GENEROUS AND NOBLE LADY, THE RIGHT JAR WILL BE THE SAFE ONE WITH THE JEWEL! THE RIGHT JAR!



MY THANKS AND BLESSINGS! TAKE MY PURSE WITH PLEASURE! NOW I MUST RETURN TO THE PALACE BEFORE I AM MISSED!

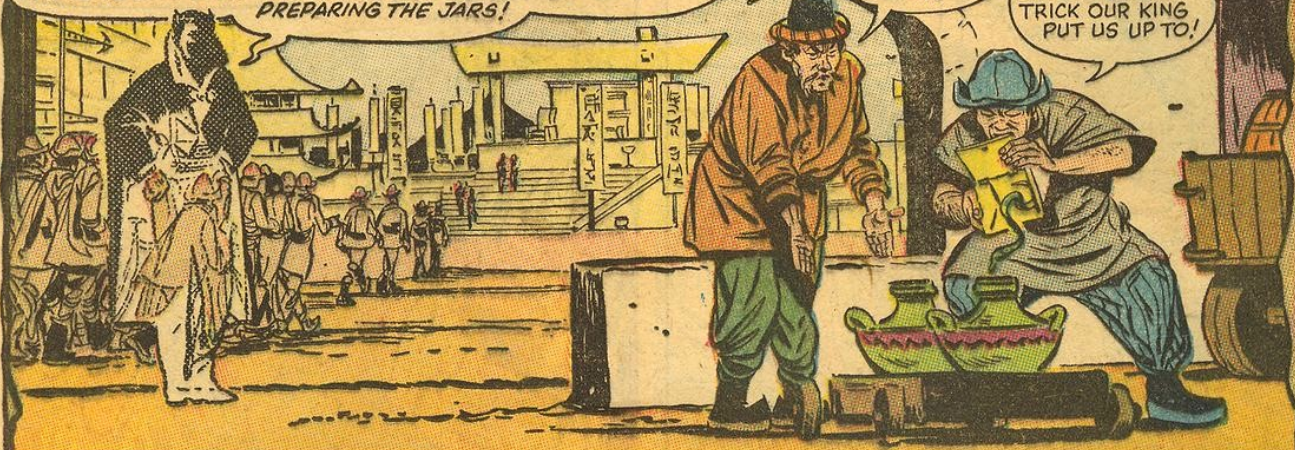


AND THUS, WE'VE SET THE STAGE! A CALM KONI, A JOYOUS SINARA, A COVETOUS KING AND TWO GREEDY HENCHMEN... ALL WAITING FOR THE MORROW... WHILE STILL UNBORN, A LITTLE FLY MAKES READY TO CHANGE THEIR LIVES, ONE AFTER ANOTHER...

THE NEXT DAY SAW ALL THE POMP AND SPLENDOR THAT ONLY AN ORIENTAL COURT COULD CONCEIVE. WHILE THE FAITHFUL SUBJECTS OF THE KING SOUGHT THEIR PLACES, THE KING'S MASTER OF ORDEALS BENT OVER HIS TASK OF PREPARING THE JARS!

NOW DON'T FORGET... THE SNAKE IN THE CORRECT JAR!

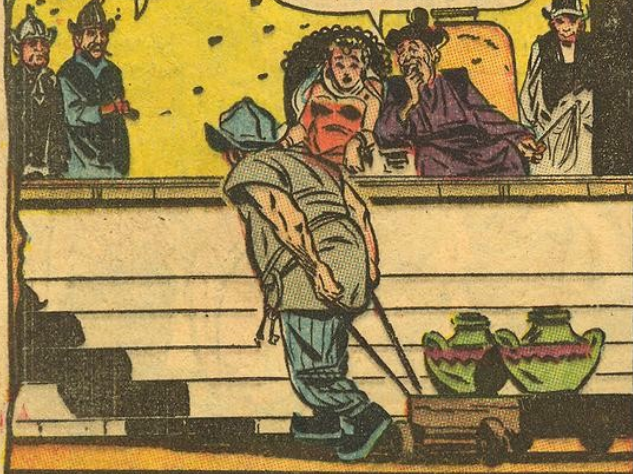
HAH! IT WAS A GREAT TRICK OUR KING PUT US UP TO!



BEHOLD, O MIGHTY ONE! THE JARS APPEAR!

GOOD! NO OFFENSE, MY DEAR, BUT I HOPE YOUR BROTHER MISSES! I'VE BEEN LOSING TOO MANY JEWELS OF LATE!

WITH A SLY WINK TO SINARA, THE MASTER PLACED THE JARS ON THE Dais... AS FLIES KEPT BUZZIN' ALL AROUND...



WE MUSTN'T FORGET THE FLIES... AND THEN AS KONI WAS BROUGHT FORTH FOR THE TRIAL, SINARA LEANED FORWARD INTENTLY...

AND AS KONI GLANCED UP, SHE FLASHED HIM THE SIGNAL, BUT A GUARD ACCIDENTALLY FELL IN HIS PATH OF VISION!

HE DIDN'T SEE MY SIGNAL! OH! WHY DON'T THEY GET OUT OF THE WAY?



AS SINARA FRANTICALLY TRIED TO CATCH KONI'S EYE, FATE STEPPED IN... BRINGING ALONG OUR FRIEND, THE FLY...



A LITTLE NUDGE AND MR. FLY WAS MAKING HIMSELF AN UNHOLY PEST ON SINARA'S LEFT CHEEK!



I WAS A BUSY BOY THERE FOR A MINUTE! AS SINARA CONCENTRATED ON THE FLY FATE TURNED KONI'S HEAD!



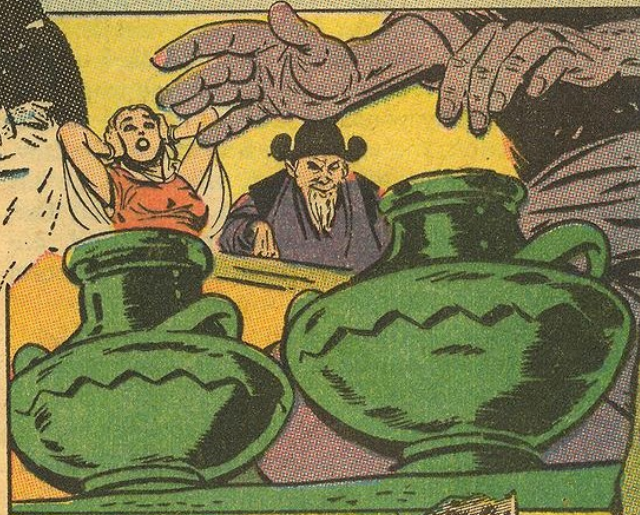
AND HE LOOKED UP JUST IN TIME TO SEE SINARA TOUCH HER LEFT CHEEK!



THE GUARDS ROUGHLY JERKED KONI AROUND AGAIN... AROUND BEFORE SINARA COULD CORRECT THE AWFUL SIGN...



THE MASTER OF ORDEALS HAD TOLD HER DISTINCTLY THE RIGHT JAR, AND IN BRUSHING AWAY THE FLY, SHE HAD SIGNALLED THE LEFT JAR WAS THE CORRECT ONE!



SHE WAS SENDING HER BROTHER TO HIS DEATH... BUT KONI CONFIDENTLY PLUNGED HIS HAND INTO THE JAR, AND PLUCKED OUT... THE JEWEL!

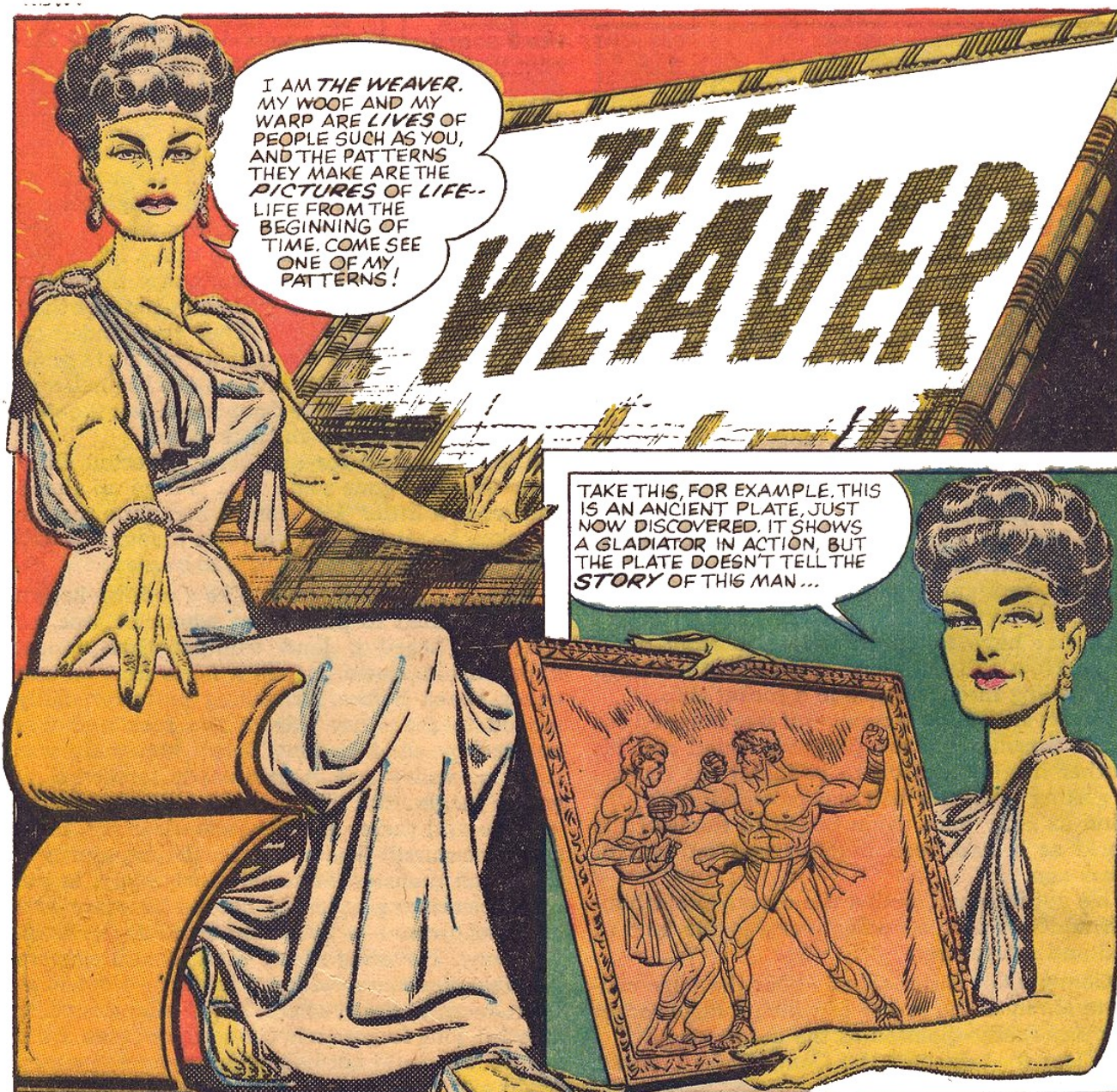


FOOL! I THOUGHT YOU SWITCHED JARS!

I DID! HOW SHE EVER GUESSED I DON'T KNOW!

AND SO, KONI AND SINARA WERE SET FREE... AND THE KING, VEXED OVER HIS LOSS OF SINARA... AND THE JEWEL... HAD HIS SOLDIERS INVITE THE ORDEALS MASTER TO FACE ONE OF HIS OWN LITTLE TESTS!





I AM **THE WEAVER**. MY WOOF AND MY WARP ARE **LIVES** OF PEOPLE SUCH AS YOU, AND THE PATTERNS THEY MAKE ARE THE **PICTURES OF LIFE**—LIFE FROM THE BEGINNING OF TIME. COME SEE ONE OF MY PATTERNS!

THE WEAVER

TAKE THIS, FOR EXAMPLE. THIS IS AN ANCIENT PLATE, JUST NOW DISCOVERED. IT SHOWS A GLADIATOR IN ACTION, BUT THE PLATE DOESN'T TELL THE **STORY** OF THIS MAN...

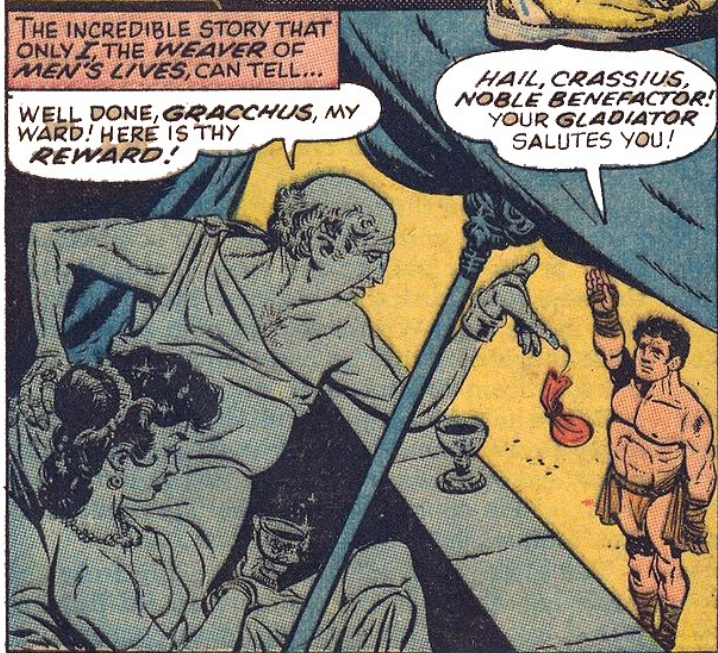
THE INCREDIBLE STORY THAT ONLY **I, THE WEAVER** OF MEN'S LIVES, CAN TELL...

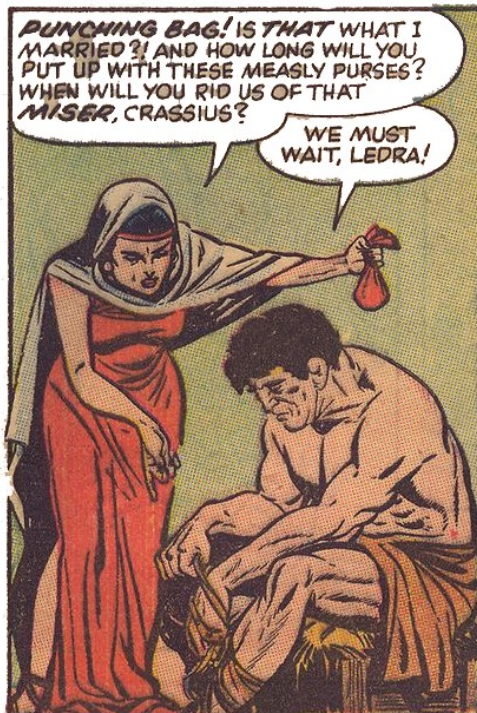
WELL DONE, **GRACCHUS**, MY WARD! HERE IS THY **REWARD!**

HAIL, **CRASSIUS**, NOBLE **BENEFACTOR!** YOUR **GLADIATOR** SALUTES YOU!

MAKE WAY, **GLADIATOR!**

CLUMSY OAF! THEY'RE ONLY GOOD FOR THE **PUNCHING BAGS!** ONE SIDE!





PUNCHING BAG! IS THAT WHAT I MARRIED?! AND HOW LONG WILL YOU PUT UP WITH THESE MEASLY PURSES? WHEN WILL YOU RID US OF THAT MISER, CRASSIUS?

WE MUST WAIT, LEDRA!



FOR WHAT? SO CRASSIUS CAN HOARD **MORE GOLD** IN HIS BED CHAMBER WHILE WE STARVE! MY PLAN WILL FREE US FROM HIM AND OUR POVERTY! WHY DO YOU HESITATE?

WE MUST BE SURE OF OUR ESCAPE...



YOU KNOW OUR PLAN IS COMPLETE... THAT MY UNCLE WILL HIDE US IN HIS CITY WHERE NO ONE WILL FIND US! YOU COWARD! YOU DO NOT INTEND TO KILL CRASSIUS! YOU LIED TO ME!



ALL RIGHT! ALL RIGHT! I'LL DO IT JUST TO SILENCE YOUR RASPING TONGUE!

BOUNTIFUL GODS! AT LAST! I HAVE MEMORIZED THE ROUTE TO MY UNCLE'S CITY, SO THAT TONIGHT...



TONIGHT?! WE DO THE DEED TONIGHT?

YES! TONIGHT! WE WAIT NO MORE!

SO THAT NIGHT AT CRASSIUS' PALACE...



SO FAR, SO GOOD...

SHH! THE SERVANTS COME!

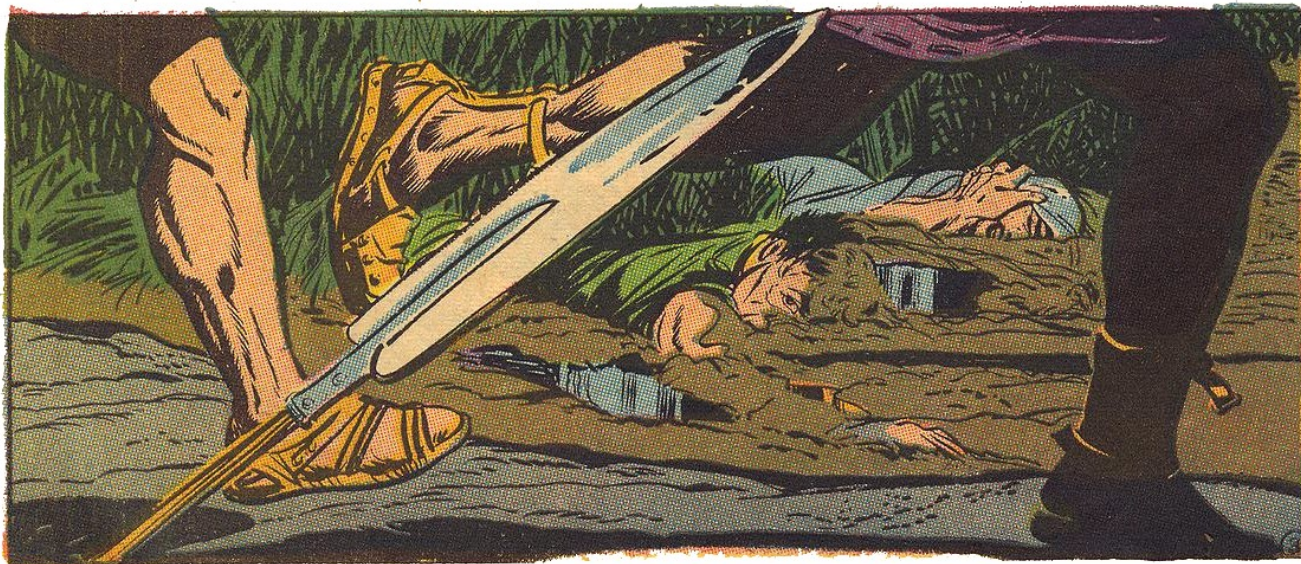
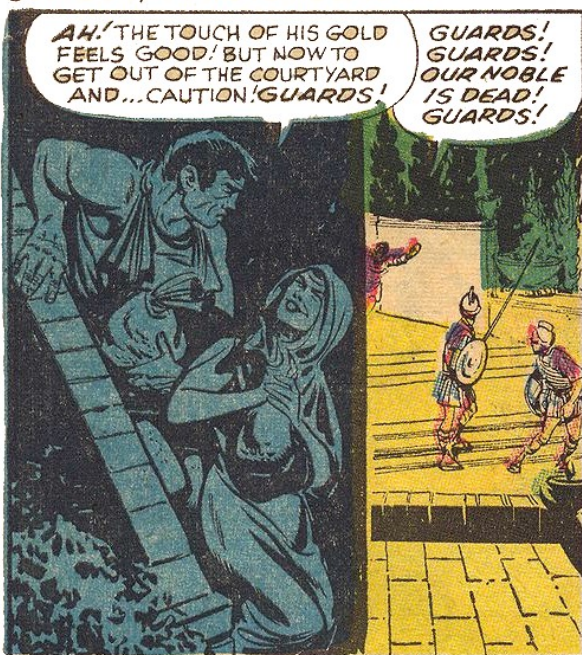


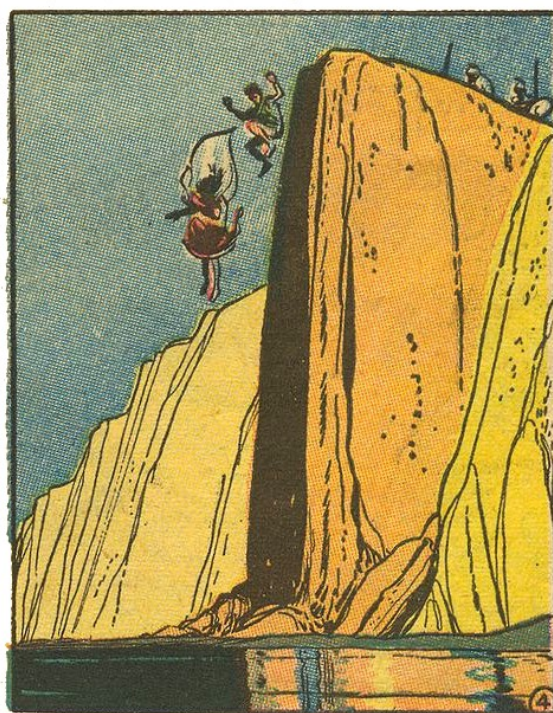
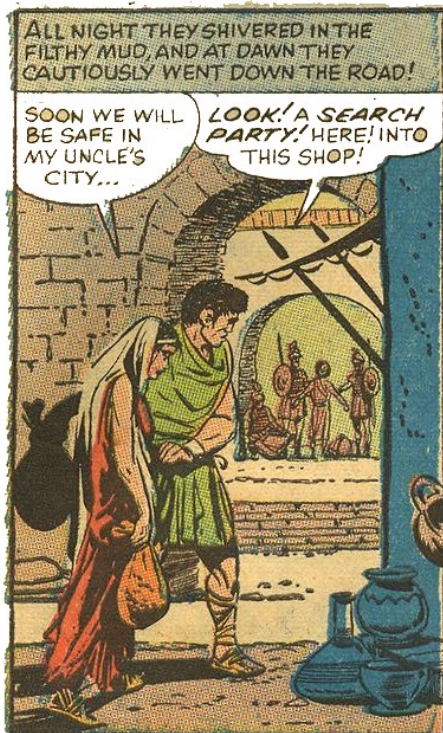
QUICKLY! DON'T LET THE DISHES FALL!

MME!



BUT HE DID, AND MOMENTS LATER...







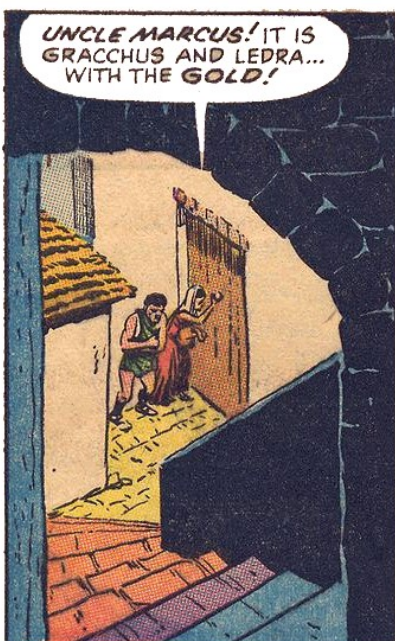
THEY... CANNOT... FOLLOW!
BY THE TIME THEY... *PUFF*
COME BY LAND WE WILL
BE WELL AWAY!

SAFE... AT
MY UNCLE'S!



LOOK! THE GREAT
VOLCANO! THE LAND-
MARK OF MY UNCLE'S
CITY... I AM TOO WEARY
TO EVEN REMEMBER
ITS NAME!

I, TOO! EVEN TODAY'S
DATE SLIPS MY MIND!
IT IS AUGUST 23RD
IS IT NOT!?



UNCLE MARCUS! IT IS
GRACCHUS AND LEDRA...
WITH THE GOLD!



AHH!
ENTER!
ENTER!



SAFE!
SAFE AT
LAST!

YES! NO
ONE WILL
FIND YOU
HERE!



AND NO ONE EVER DID! REMEMBER THE CITY OF
POMPEII ON AUGUST 24, 79 A.D. IT WAS COMPLETELY
BURIED BY AN ERUPTING VOLCANO... KILLING THE
ENTIRE POPULATION!



THIS PLATE WAS
FOUND IN A SUB-
BASEMENT OF A
HOUSE ON WHAT
HAD BEEN THE UHI
ARCTUS IN THE
DEAD CITY OF
POMPEII!

THE
END



WHEW! WHAT A NASTY CRACKUP! TOO BAD! HE WAS A NICE GUY... LEFT A GIRL BEHIND TOO!... A GIRL WHO LOVED HIM! IF I HAD ONLY BEEN THERE TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT THAT WHEEL!

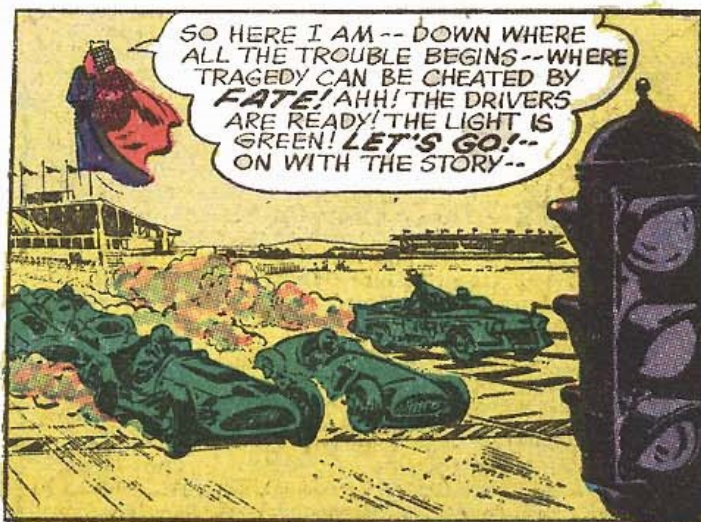


OH, OH! I SHOULDN'T HAVE MENTIONED LOVE! NOW VENUS WILL POUT ALL DAY!

YOU CAN STILL DO SOMETHING! THIS PAPER DOESN'T REACH EARTH UNTIL TONIGHT! THE WEAVER WILL TELL YOU THAT!



VENUS IS RIGHT, MAN IN BLACK! I HAVEN'T FINISHED WEAVING THE PATTERN OF HIS LIFE! THERE IS STILL TIME!



SO HERE I AM -- DOWN WHERE ALL THE TROUBLE BEGINS -- WHERE TRAGEDY CAN BE CHEATED BY **FATE!** AHH! THE DRIVERS ARE READY! THE LIGHT IS GREEN! **LET'S GO!** -- ON WITH THE STORY --

THERE ARE THOSE WHO BELIEVE THEY KNOW THEIR FATE...AND TRUSTING IN IT, TAKE A LITTLE ADVANTAGE OF IT. ONE SUCH PERSON WAS LEE DI POLO... AND A WHEEL, A CAN OF OIL, AND MR. DI POLO MAKE FOR AN UNCANNY STORY OF THE HAND OF FATE!

MAN in BLACK

CRACK-UP!



OH, LEE! IT'S SO DANGEROUS! WON'T YOU GIVE UP RACING? I BEG YOU!

HONEY...HONEY, NOTHING WILL HAPPEN TO ME... NOTHING CAN! I KNOW! I JUST KNOW!

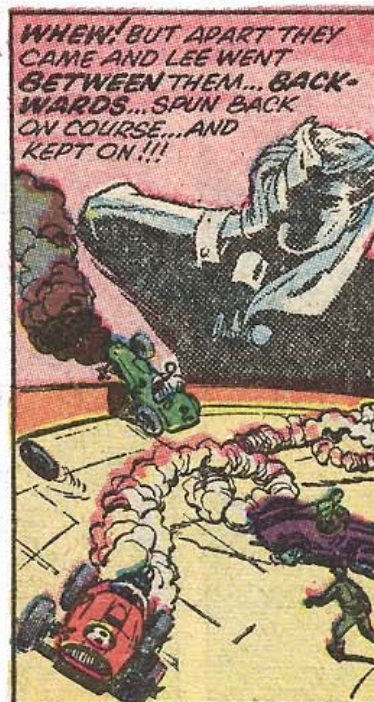
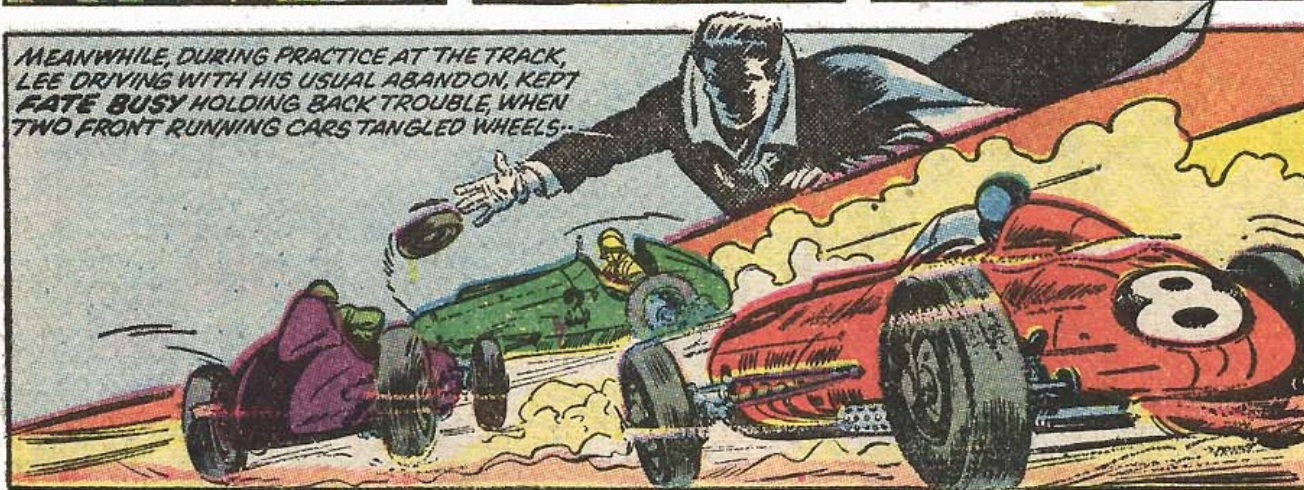


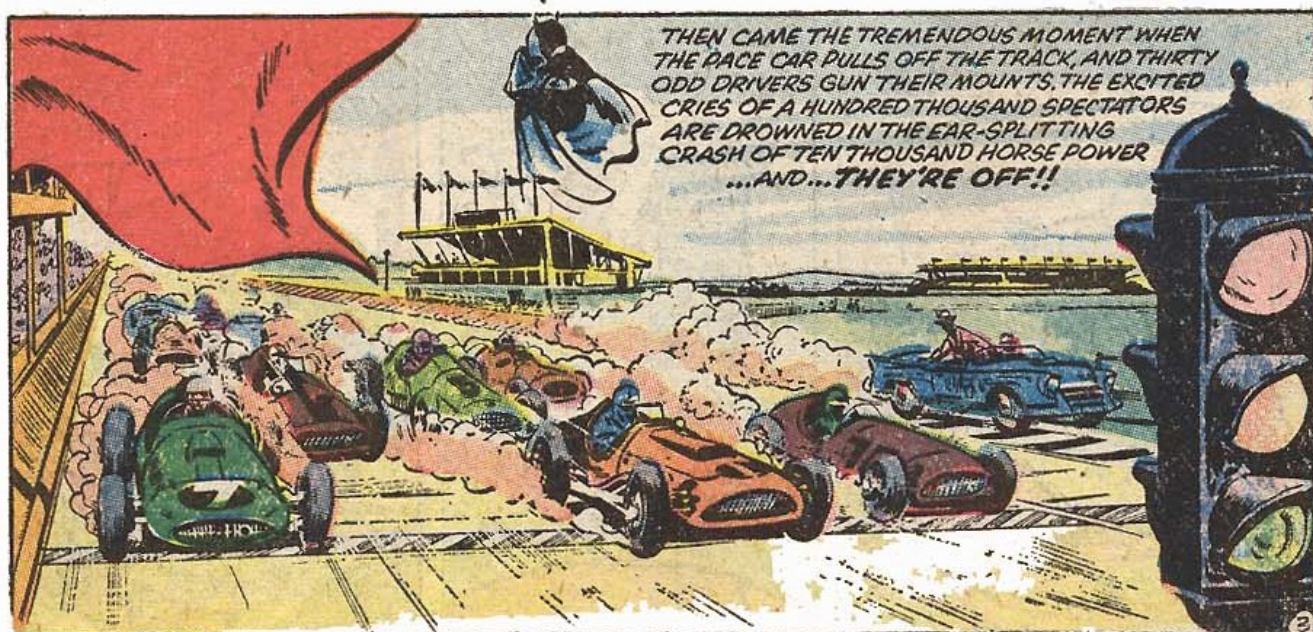
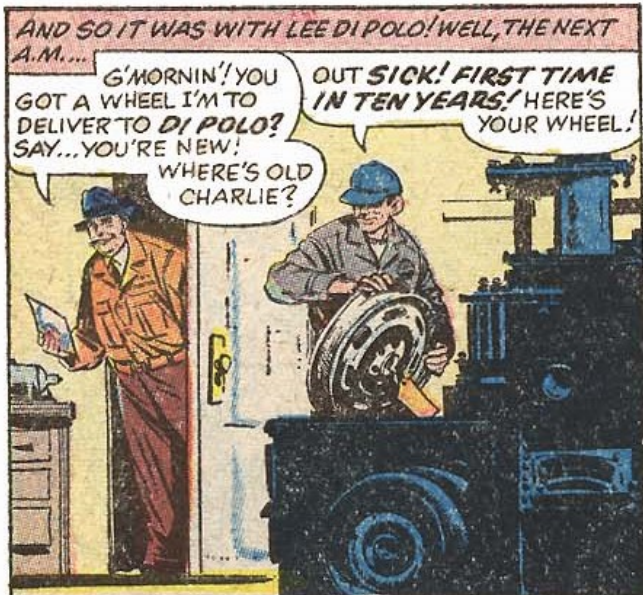
THAT'S NONSENSE! WHY, ANYTHING COULD HAPPEN! ONE BAD BREAK FROM FATE AND...!

THAT'S JUST IT! I KNOW MY FATE! THERE WON'T BE ANY BAD BREAKS!

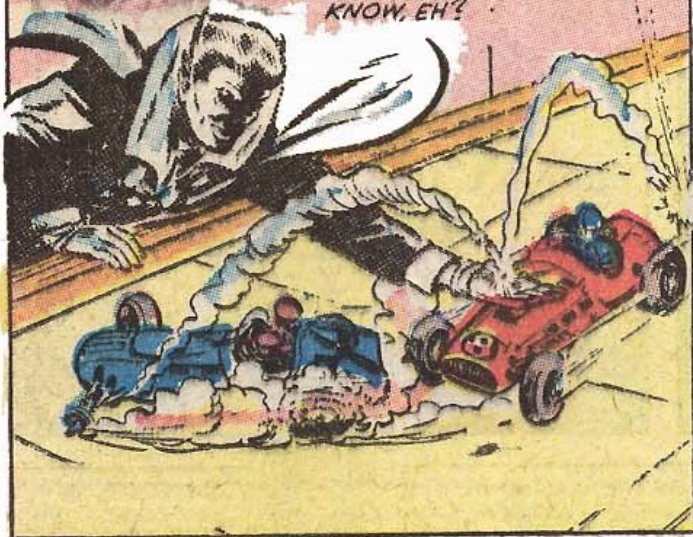
SO YOU SEE THE POSITION THAT PUTS FATE INTO! HMM...?



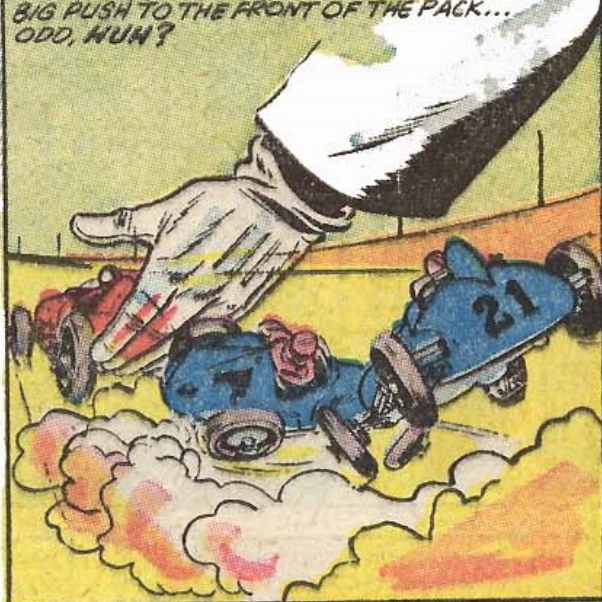




AS USUAL, TROUBLE FOUND LEE WHEN THE CAR AHEAD SHED A WHEEL... IT WAS HEADING STRAIGHT FOR THE MIDDLE OF HIS HOOD WHEN IT STRANGELY DEFLECTED... REVERSE TORQUE AND PARALLAX ENERGY IS THE WAY THE HIGH DOMES EXPLAINED IT'S CRAZY DOUBLE ARC OF FLIGHT... BUT WE KNOW, EH?



THEN ANOTHER CAR SPUN AND CRASHED INTO A RIVAL AND SHOULD HAVE CREAMED LEE'S REAR DECK, BUT ALL IT DID WAS GIVE HIM A BIG PUSH TO THE FRONT OF THE PACK... ODD, HUM?



GET SET! LEE'S COMIN' IN FOR GAS AND A TIRE CHANGE... USE THAT NEW WHEEL!



THE CRACKED WHEEL? OH, NO!



THERE'S TROUBLE ENOUGH WITHOUT A BUM WHEEL! GOT TO FIX THAT RIGHT NOW!

YOU CLUMSY FOOL! HURRY UP! GET ANOTHER WHEEL!

DON'T BOTHER! I'LL RIDE ON THE OLD TIRE!



LEE, COME BACK! THAT TIRE'LL NEVER LAST!

HA! HA! STOP WORRYING!



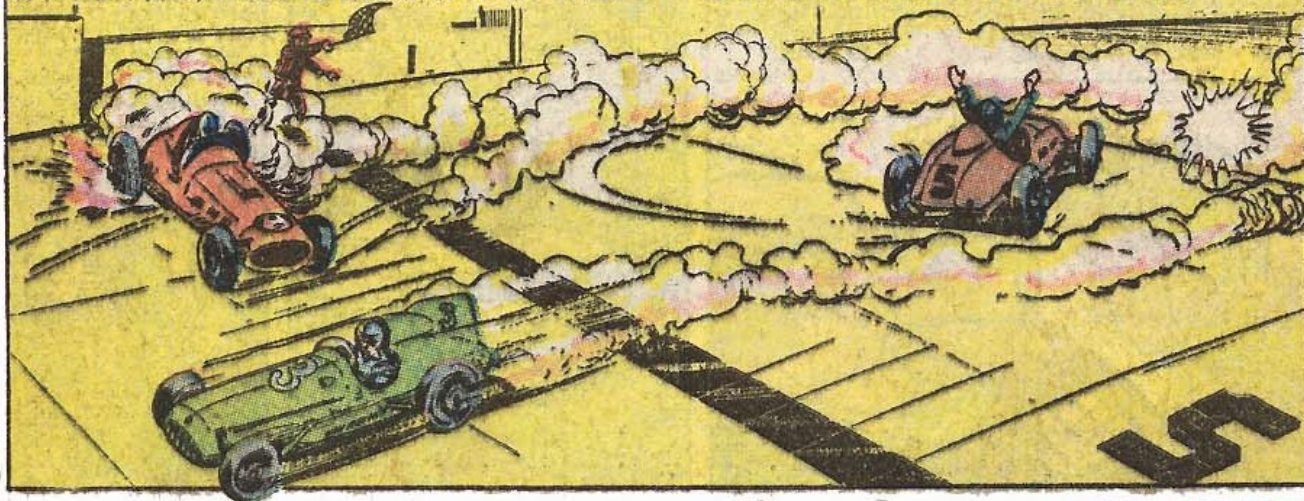
AND YOU! HOW'D YOU EVER SPILL OIL ON THAT TIRE?

S'HELP ME, CHIEF, I SWEAR THAT CRAZY CAN LITERALLY JUMPED OFF THE WALL BY ITSELF!... OOPS!





IN A TWINKLING, IT CAUSED LEE'S CAR TO SPIN VIOLENTLY IN A TIGHT ARC, NARROWLY MISSING HIS CAR IN FRONT AND WINDING UP SCREECHING SIDEWAYS ACROSS THE FINISH LINE... IN SECOND PLACE!



GOOD GRIEF, LEE! THAT WAS CLOSE! YOU'RE LUCKY AS THE DEVIL!

WOW! DO YOU REALIZE IF THAT TIRE HADN'T BLOWN YOU MIGHT BE A DEAD DUCK! WHAT LUCK!



LUCKY? PFODEY! WHY DIDN'T I WIN THEN?... I... OOPS!



ONE GUESS WHO CAUSED THAT FLOP! SOME PEOPLE JUST PUSH THEIR LUCK A LITTLE BIT TOO FAR... THE UNGRATEFUL PUP!



THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

PART 1

MUCH OF HISTORY HAS BEEN
DECIDED BY A WHIM OF **FATE**...
AND HERE IS AN EPISODE THAT
WAS INFLUENCED ENTIRELY BY
A LITTLE CHUNK OF **TIERED
OLD
ROCK!**



WHAT CAN WE
DO? WE'LL BE
HELPLESS
BEFORE HIS
ARMY!

ONCE THE GENERAL
CROSSES THE
RIVER **ALL
IS LOST!**

THE **DEMOCRA-
TIC REPUBLIC**
IS AT AN END
UNLESS OUR ARMIES
CAN STOP HIM!



HA! OUR ARMIES COULDN'T HOLD BACK A FLEA!
CASSIUS IS RIGHT! **IF HE CROSSES THE RIVER,
ALL IS LOST!** HOWEVER, THE SPRING THAW
HAS BEEN EXCEPTIONALLY HEAVY THIS YEAR AND
THE RIVER IS A RAGING DEMON! **FATE AND
FLOOD MAY SAVE
US YET!**



FATE... AND FLOOD...
WELL, PERHAPS...
MEANWHILE...

FLOODED! WE'LL
NEVER GET ACROSS
**THAT RIVER,
GENERAL!**



NONSENSE! THE
GREATEST SOLDIERS
IN THE WORLD WON'T
LET A LITTLE WATER
STOP THEM AT THIS
LATE DATE! ONWARD,
MEN! **MARCH!**



**BRAVELY RECKLESSLY, THE MEN FOLLOWED THEIR LEADER
INTO THE CHURNING WATER... AND ANIMAL AND MAN,
SOLDIER AND GENERAL WERE GRIPPED, BEATEN AND FORCED
BACK BY THE ANGRY RIVER... WEAPONS, MATERIEL AND LIVES
WERE LOST...**



**THE MIGHTY GENERAL AND HIS ARMY WERE
CRUSHED AND GREAT WAS THE JUBILATION
IN THE CITY... WHEN THE VICTORIOUS
LEGIONS MARCHED HOME IN TRIUMPH!**



WELL, THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE
HAPPENED ... BUT...!!?

THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

PART 2

IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED THAT WAY... **BUT IT DIDN'T!** AND IT DIDN'T BECAUSE OF THIS LITTLE OLD ROCK MENTIONED EARLIER. IT'S AN ORDINARY COMMON TYPE STONE WHOSE HOME WAS HIGH IN THE FOOT HILLS...



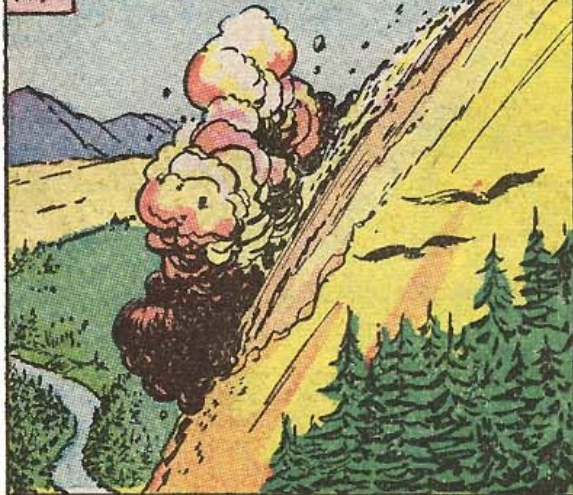
THE SNOWS HAD BEEN HEAVY THAT WINTER AND AN EARLY HOT SPRING SENT MANY TINY RIVULETS EATING AWAY AT THE RESISTANT ROCKS... IN PARTICULAR **OUR ROCK**...



STUBBORNLY IT HELD, BUT AT LAST THE RELENTLESS, GREEDY WATER ERODED THE SURROUNDING SOIL AND IT FELL...



AND A GREAT FALL IT WAS INDEED... FOR AS **FATE** WOULD HAVE IT, OUR ROCK WAS THE KEY STONE FOR TONS OF LOOSE SHALE AND ROCK THAT MERRILY TUMBLED DOWN BEHIND IT!



AND SOMETIME LATER, A GENERAL CAME TO A RIVER WITH HIS ARMY... ALL OF THEM BEING MENTIONED EARLIER.

I'VE NEVER SEEN THE RIVER THIS **LOW!** TO CROSS WILL BE **NOTHING!**

AYE! FATE CAUSING THAT AVALANCHE HAS MADE OUR ADVANCE ALMOST **TOO EASY!** ORDER THE MEN TO CROSS, TRIBUNE!



THE GREATEST FIGHTING MEN IN THE WORLD... SOON THE WORLD WILL BE OURS! AND THIS CROSSING... BY THE GODS! AS IF **FATE** INTENDED OUR MEETING WITH DESTINY TO BE MADE EASY!



WE HAVE CROSSED THE **RUBICON!** THE DIE IS CAST! ONWARD TO THE CITY!



AND THE CITY, AS YOUR HISTORY BOOKS WILL TELL YOU, WAS **ROME**... AND THE GENERAL, **JULIUS CAESAR**, WHO MARCHED THAT DAY TO OVERTHROW A WEAK, CORRUPT GOVERNMENT AND BECOME THE FIRST OF THE GREAT... AND NOT SO GREAT... ROMAN EMPERORS! **CAESAR IMPERATOR!** RULER OF THE WORLD!... BECAUSE OF AN **OVERGROWN PEBBLE!**



MAN in BLACK

HERE, YOU SEE A CURIOUS BEAR...A LOST EMERGENCY FLARE AND AN ASSASSIN'S GUN... THEY SEEM UNRELATED, DON'T THEY? BUT FATE PUT THEM TOGETHER TO CHANGE HISTORY!



MENACE on the IRON HORSE

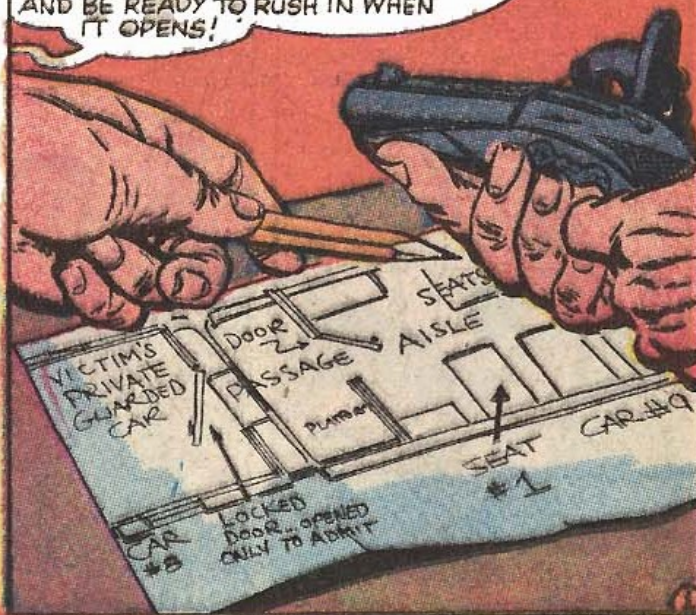
WE NEED SOMEONE WHO FEELS AS WE DO, JOHN - **SOMEONE LIKE YOU!** ARE YOU WILLING TO TRY TO KILL "HIM"?...

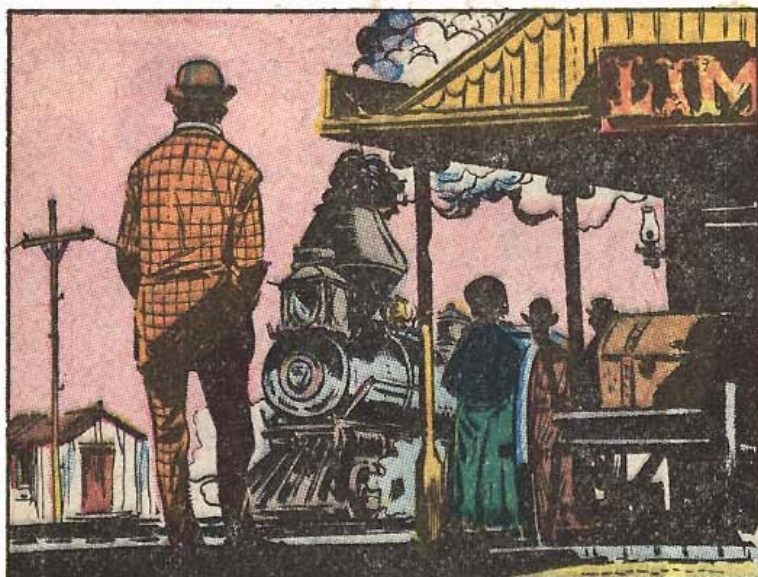
FOR THE PRICE YE QUOTE, AYE! WHAT'S YER PLAN?



HE'LL BE IN **CAR 8** OF THE SHILOH EXPRESS TRAIN BEHIND A **CLOSED DOOR** AND SURROUNDED BY BODYGUARDS. ONLY **ONCE** WILL THAT DOOR BE OPENED... THAT'S WHEN THE WAITER COMES IN WITH THE DINNER... YOU SIT IN SEAT ONE OF **CAR 9** SO YOU CAN WATCH THE DOOR AND BE READY TO RUSH IN WHEN IT OPENS!

AYE! **CAR 9 SEAT 1! GOTCHA!**







FATE IS KIND. THIS DAY, THE SEAT NEEDED TO WATCH HIS DOOR! ONCE THEY OPEN IT FOR THE WAITER, ALL THE GUARDS IN THE WORLD WON'T SAVE HIM!

HA!



HERE COMES THE WAITER!

GO 'WAY, KID!

DON' WANNA!



THE DOOR'S OPENING! I'VE GOTTA MOVE FAST!

GET OUTA TH' WAY!



SORRY YOUNG MAN, BUT TRIPPING YOU IS IMPORTANT TO THE STORY!



...AND I'M TAKING THE CAKE TO MY... OH!



OH! OH! YOU CLUMSY OAF! YOU'VE RUINED MY CAKE!

...AND MY OPPORTUNITY! PLAGUE TAKE YOUR CAKE!

TEMPER! TEMPER!

BAW!





JUST THINK, JOE! HE'S COMING TO SEE US... RIGHT IN HERE! WHY IF... **LOOK! EMERGENCY FLARE!**



HE'S COMING AT LAST...



BRAKES! BRAKES!

SCREEEE

SCREECH

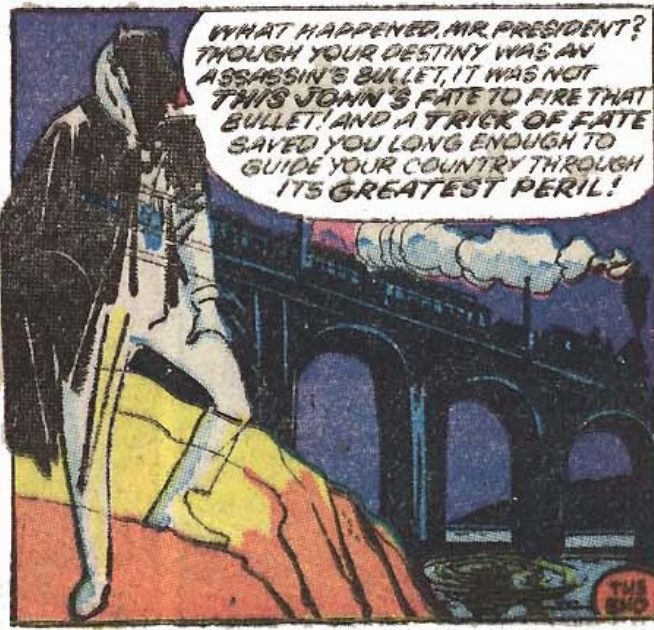


BANG SCREEECH



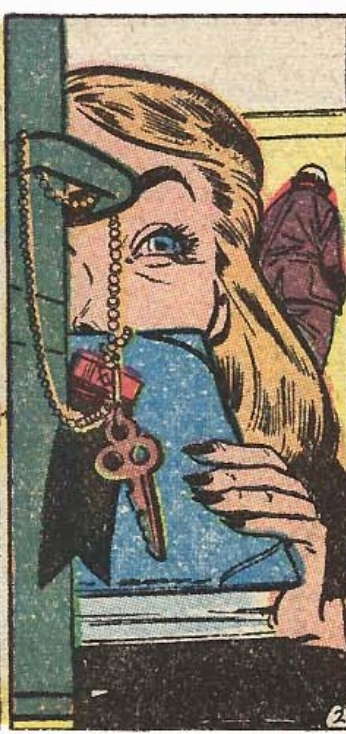
ARE YOU ALL RIGHT, MR. PRESIDENT?!

YES...YES... WHAT HAPPENED?



WHAT HAPPENED, MR. PRESIDENT? THOUGH YOUR DESTINY WAS AN ASSASSIN'S BULLET, IT WAS NOT THIS JOAN'S FATE TO FIRE THAT BULLET! AND A TRICK OF FATE SAVED YOU LONG ENOUGH TO GUIDE YOUR COUNTRY THROUGH ITS GREATEST PERIL!







THAT'S RIGHT, HILEE, YOU GO TO THE CABINET... INSERT THE KEY... AND...



YOU, MISS! WHAT ARE YOU DOING THERE!!?

WHAT...? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?!

OH...THE KEY...SOME ONE LEFT IT IN THE CABINET AND I T-TOOK IT SO AN ENEMY COULDN'T... HERE! YOU TAKE IT!



EXCELLENT! WELL DONE! I AM...

GENERAL BROM... I KNOW...WHO DOESN'T KNOW OUR GREATEST PATRIOT?

I KNOW, TOO, BUT WHAT'S HE DOING HERE? THE SCRIPT SAYS... WAIT!



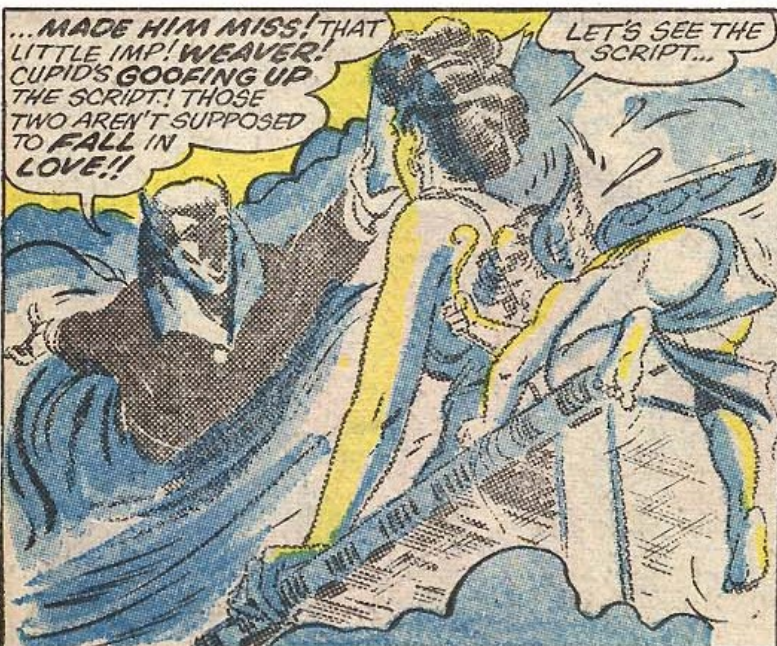
I HAVE A SNEAKING SUSPICION...

GREATEST PATRIOT? PERHAPS! BUT THE TITLE OF THE MOST BEAUTIFUL IS DEFINITELY YOURS!



AHA! CUPID! FIRING LOVE DARTS!

AH, YA MADE ME MISS, YA... ULP! OH! OH! BYE!



...MADE HIM MISS! THAT LITTLE IMP! WEAVER! CUPID'S GOOFING UP THE SCRIPT! THOSE TWO AREN'T SUPPOSED TO FALL IN LOVE!!

LET'S SEE THE SCRIPT...



SOMETHING'S WHACKY! MY PATTERN SAYS BROM COMES IN ALL RIGHT, THO' I DON'T REMEMBER... OH, WELL, DON'T WORRY, IT ENDS LIKE THE SCRIPT SAYS. GUESS I GOOFED!

I WONDER?

I DON'T WONDER!





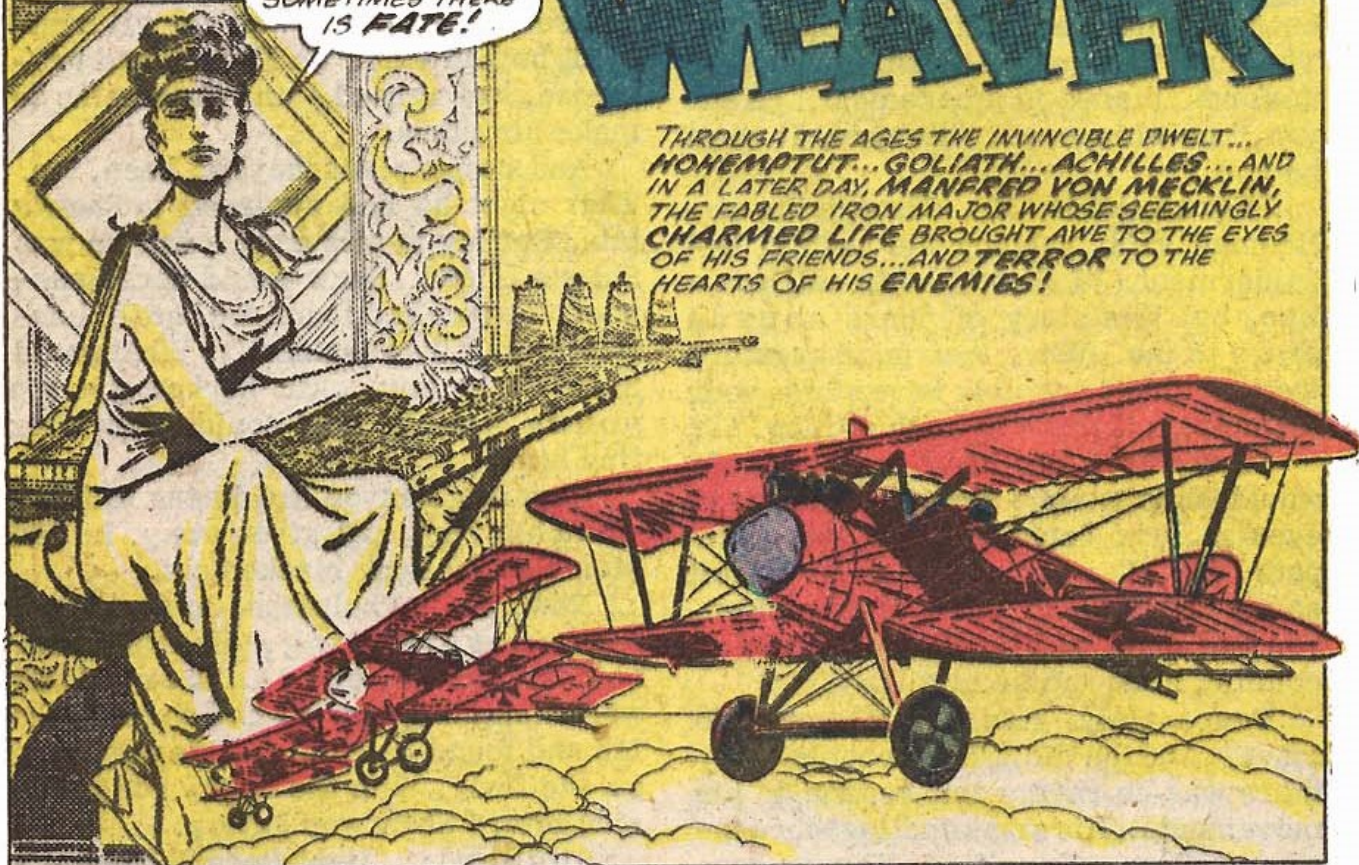
THE END

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE ONE

'TIS SAID THAT SOME MEN ARE **UNBEATABLE, INVINCIBLE,** AND THAT **I, THE WEAVER,** SPINNING OUT THE THREADS OF PEOPLE'S LIVES ON MY THREE LOOMS OF LIFE, DEATH AND HEREAFTER, MAKE IT SO! PERHAPS, BUT SOMETIMES THERE ARE **OTHER FACTORS, OTHER FORCES...** AND SOMETIMES THERE IS **FATE!**

Starring **THE WEAVER**

THROUGH THE AGES THE INVINCIBLE DWELT... **NOHEMPTUT... GOLIATH... ACHILLES...** AND IN A LATER DAY, **MANFRED VON MECKLIN,** THE FABLED IRON MAJOR WHOSE SEEMINGLY **CHARMED LIFE** BROUGHT AWE TO THE EYES OF HIS FRIENDS... AND **TERROR** TO THE HEARTS OF HIS ENEMIES!



FRANCE, IN THE LATE SPRING OF 1917... AT THE BRITISH AERODROME, RHEIMS...

OUR NEW PLANES HERE AT LAST!

RIGHT-O! WE'LL BE ON EVEN TERMS WITH VON MECKLIN NOW!



WHAT DO YOU THINK, CORPORAL? ARE THESE SHIPS AS GOOD AS VON MECKLIN'S ALBATROSES?

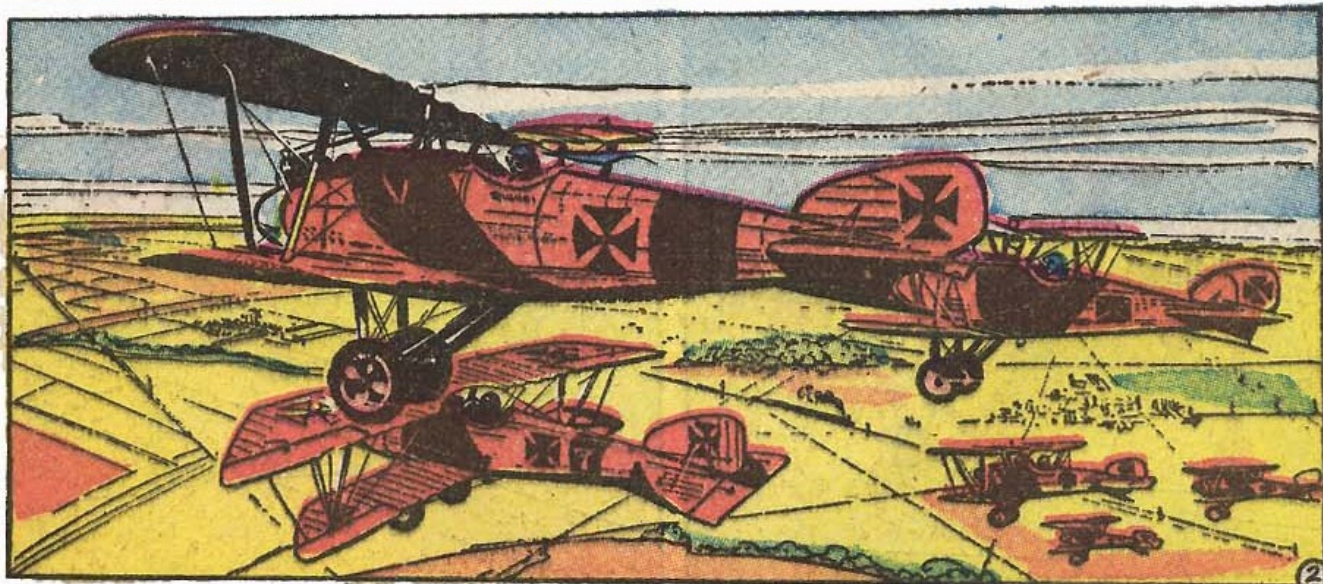
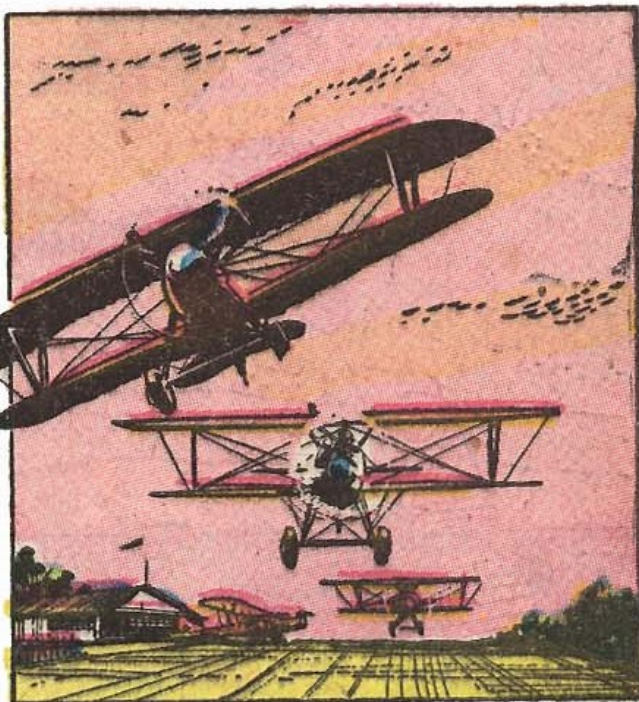
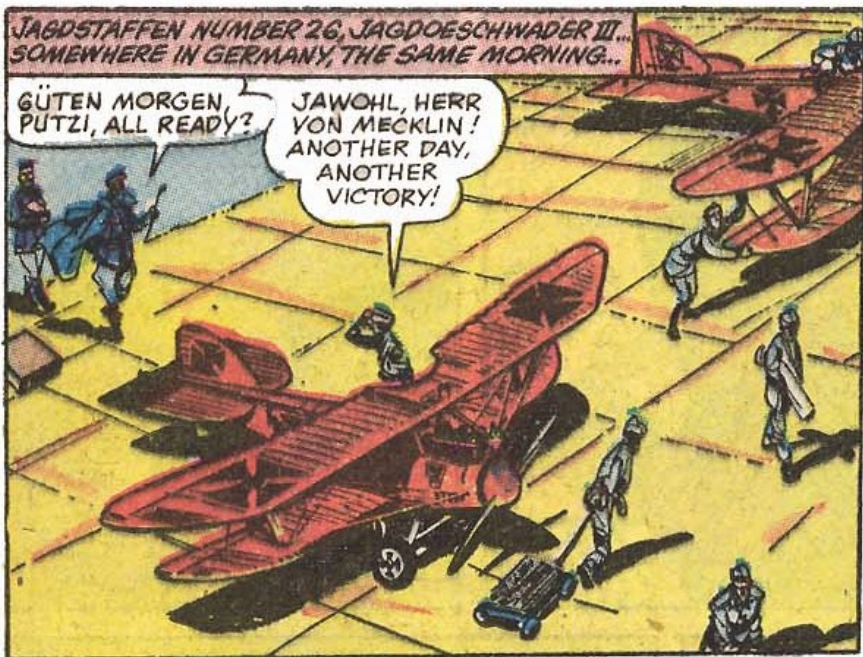
BETTER, SIR! THE D-3'S WON'T BE ABLE TO TOUCH THESE SE-5'S!



WHY LOOK'ERE AT TH' DETAIL AN' WORKMANSHIP, SIR! EVEN THIS OIL DRAIN CAP IS MACHINED! COUPLE OF THESE BEAUTIES WITH TH' BEST PILOTS IN TH' WORLD, SIR, AN—

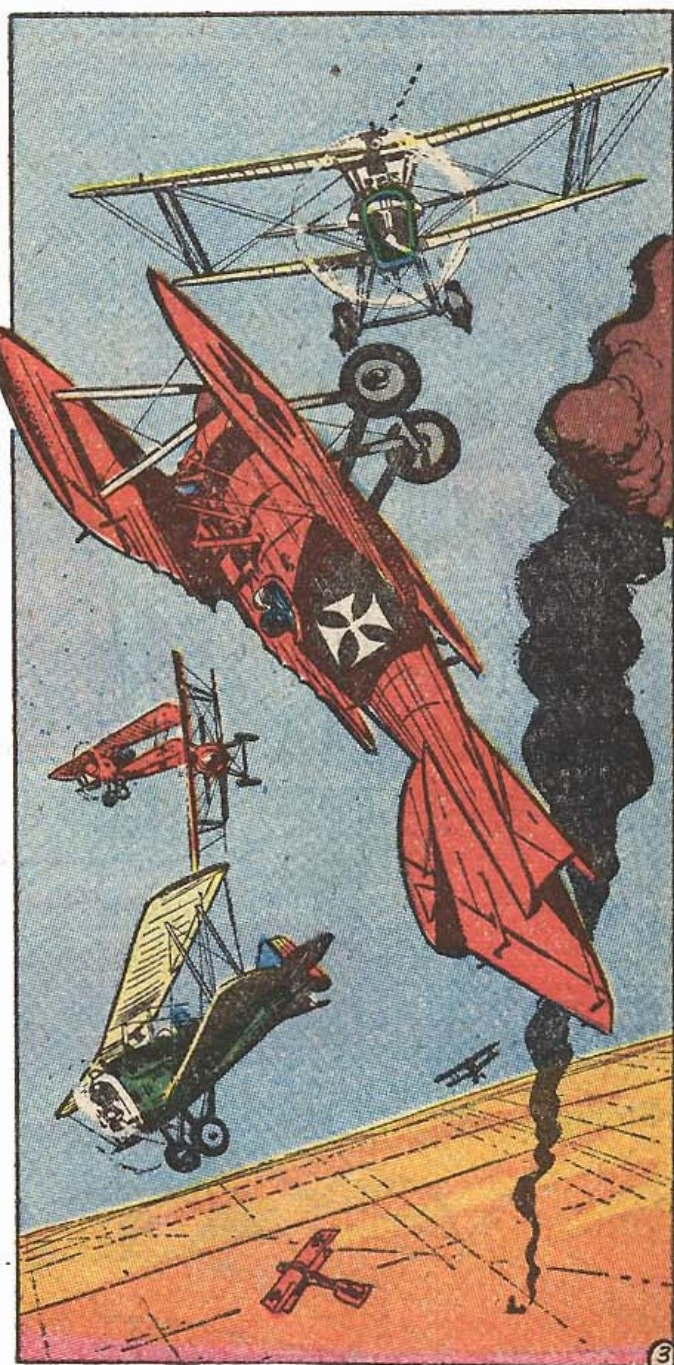
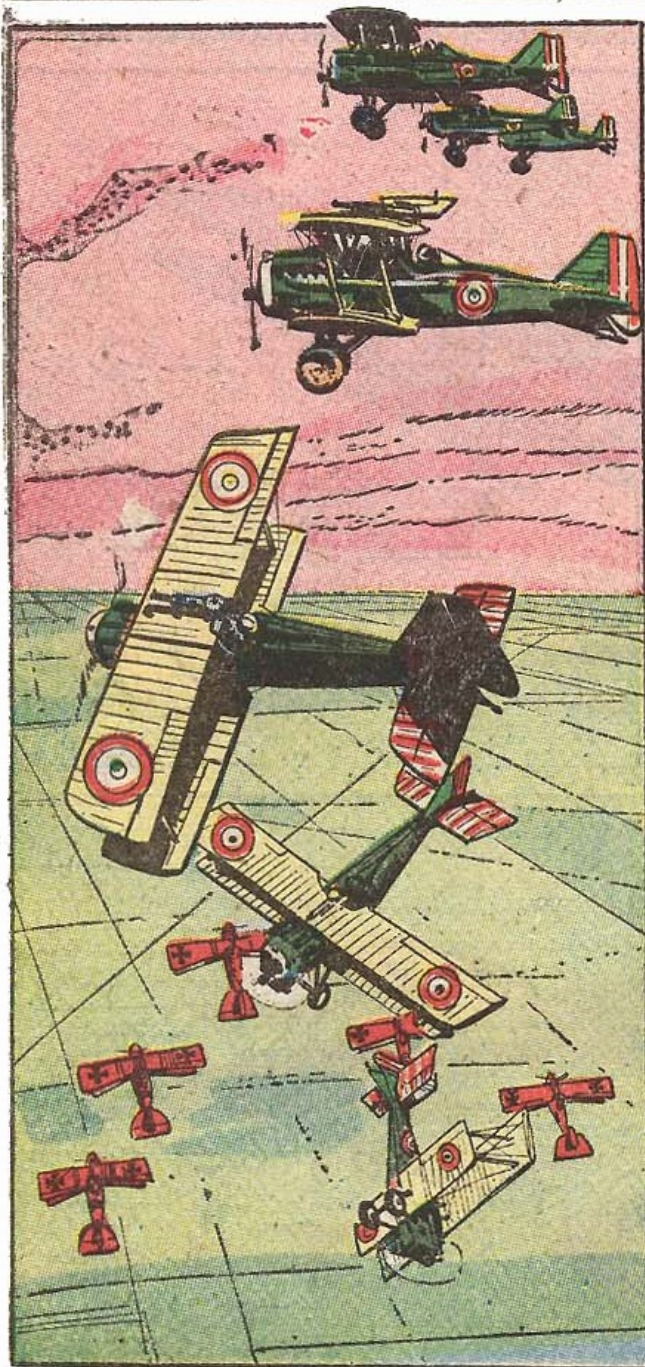
COME OFF THE BLARNEY, CORPORAL!

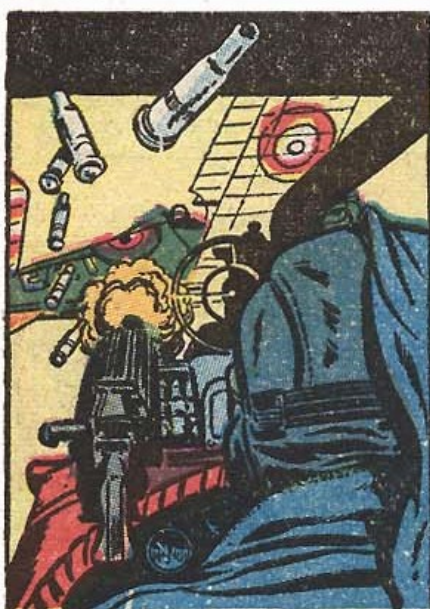
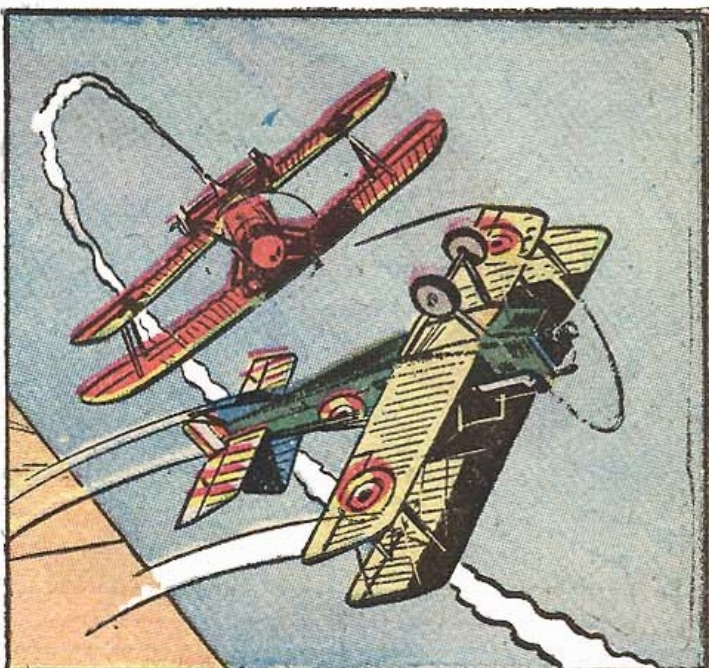
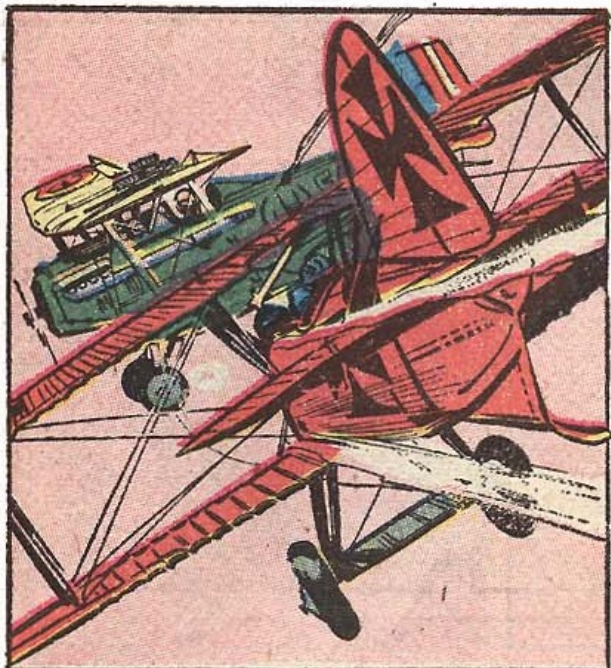




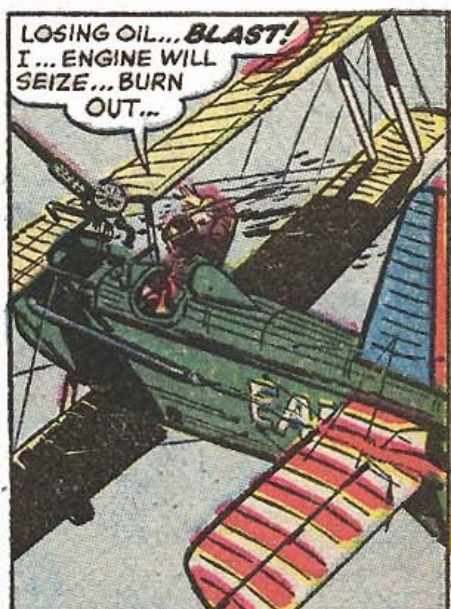
OFF YE GO, SIR! **GOOD LUCK** AN' BRING ME BACK AN ALBATROS TAIL PIECE!

WHY, CORPORAL, IF THESE PLANES ARE AS GOOD AS YOU SAY I'LL BRING YOU BACK **OLD IRON** MAJOR VON MELKIN HIMSELF!

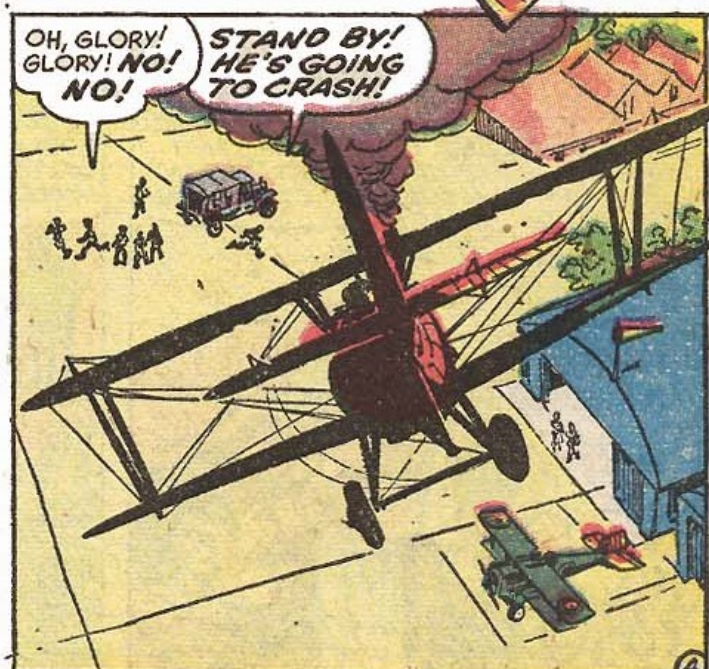
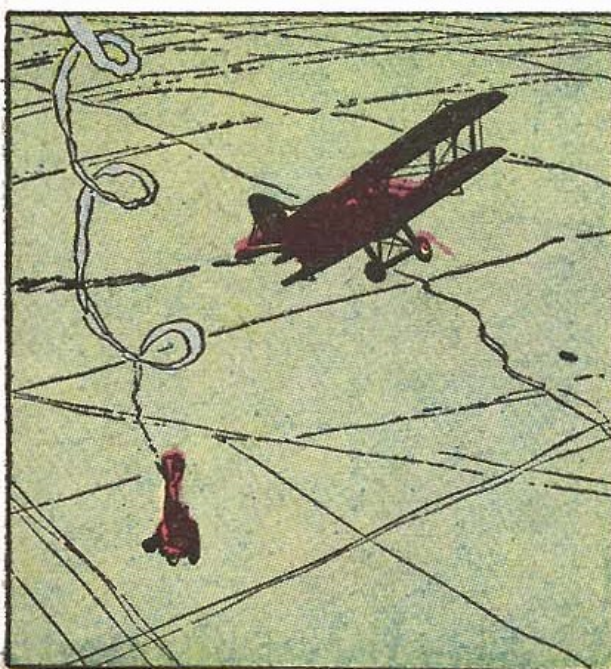




WHA...?! HE'S HIT THE PLANE! SHATTERED THE OIL DRAIN CAP!

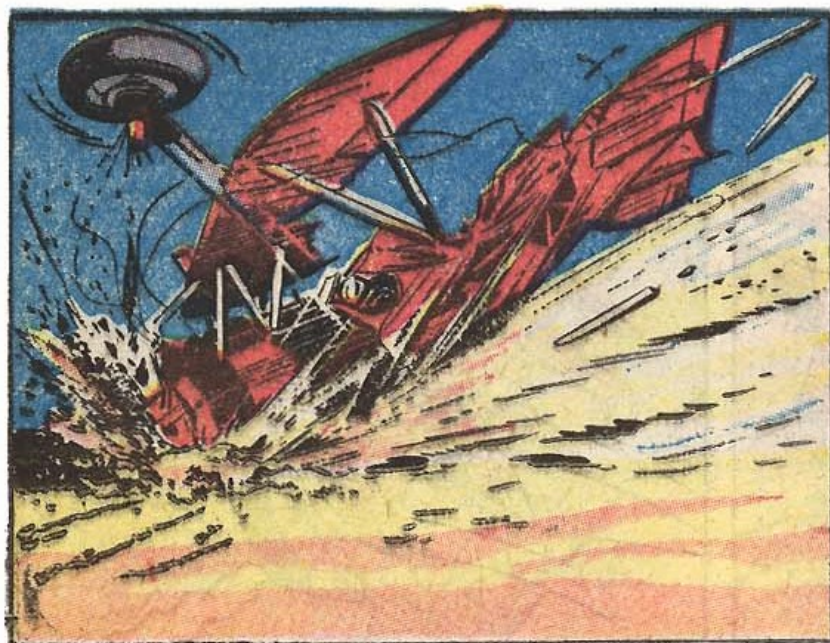


LOSING OIL... BLAST! I ... ENGINE WILL SEIZE... BURN OUT...



OH, GLORY! GLORY! NO! NO!

STAND BY! HE'S GOING TO CRASH!



BLIMEY, ALF!
WILL YOU LOOK
SEE WHO IT
BE!

GOR?! IT'S TH'
OLD BOY HIS
SELF, IT IS!



WELL BLESS
MY...! WILL
YOU LOOK
SEE HERE!

HOLD IT! HERE COMES ROLF! HIS
ENGINE'S STOPPED! HE'S DEAD-
STICKING
IN!



HEY, HERO BOY!
YOU HIT THE
JACKPOT! YOU
KNOCKED
DOWN VON
MECKLIN!

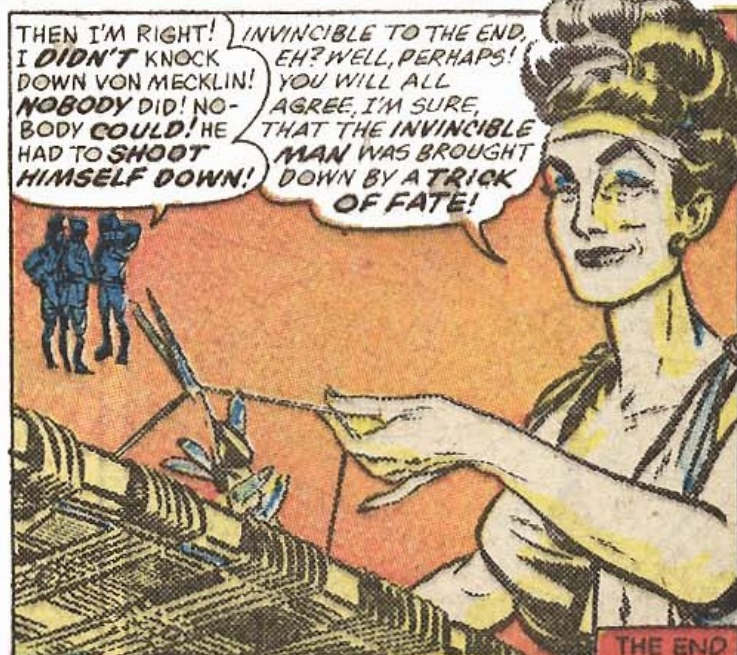
VON...?! HA! SURE! SURE, I DID-
LISTEN, I DIDN'T EVEN FIRE **ONE**
SHOT BEFORE MY OIL SUMP DRAIN
CAP GOT BLOWN TO BITS! NATURALLY,
I LOST MY OIL AND WHEN THE
ENGINE SEIZED, I DEAD-STICKED
DOWN...



OKAY... BUT
WHO SAID
ANYTHING
ABOUT
SHOOTING?
THIS IS
WHAT YOU
KNOCKED HIM
DOWN WITH!

**YOU'RE
BALMY!**
THAT
LOOKS
LIKE
PART OF
THE OIL
SUMP
CAP!

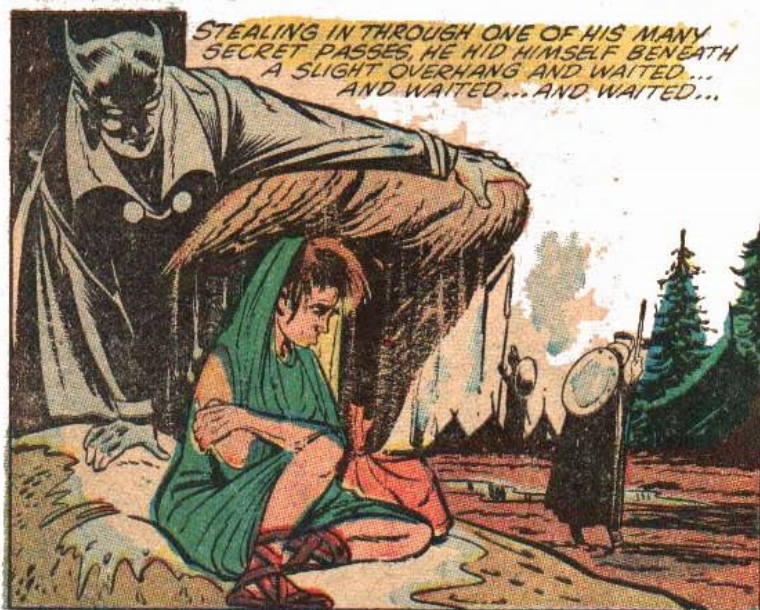
IT IS! **YOURS!** WE
FOUND IT IN HIS
COCKPIT! HIS BULLET
MUST HAVE SHATTERED
IT AND THIS PART
RICOCHETED BACK
AND CONKED HIM!



THEN I'M RIGHT!
I **DIDN'T** KNOCK
DOWN VON MECKLIN!
NOBODY DID! NO-
BODY **COULD!** HE
HAD TO **SHOOT**
HIMSELF DOWN!

INVINCIBLE TO THE END,
EH? WELL, PERHAPS!
YOU WILL ALL
AGREE, I'M SURE,
THAT THE INVINCIBLE
MAN WAS BROUGHT
DOWN BY A **TRICK**
OF FATE!

THE END



STEALING IN THROUGH ONE OF HIS MANY SECRET PASSES, HE HID HIMSELF BENEATH A SLIGHT OVERHANG AND WAITED... AND WAITED... AND WAITED...



BLASTED RAIN!
ALEXANDER WILL NEVER COME OUT... MAYBE IT'S STOPPING... I'LL LOO...
KILP!
THAT DOES IT!!



I GUESS **FATE** JUST DIDN'T WANT ME TO BECOME A SCULPTOR!

OH, BUT **FATE** DID...AND DOES!



HA! HA! WHAT GRACE! WHAT FORM!

!!?



DOGGONE IT! WHY'D THE KID HAVE TO PICK **THAT** SENTRY...OR DID **FATE** PICK HIM...? ANYWAY, HE'S FIT TO BE TIED AND IF **FATE** DOESN'T PROTECT HIM THAT YOUNG FELLOW HAS **HAD IT!!**

MAN in BLACK

the GENIUS

AMBITION... COURAGE... THE TRADEMARKS OF YOUTH! ALEXANDER THE GREAT HAD THEM IN ABUNDANCE AND AT TWENTY-FIVE, HAD ALREADY BECOME A FAMOUS GENERAL AND CONQUEROR! BUT THEN OUR TALENTED YOUNG HERO ALSO HAD THOSE TRAITS, AND WHEN THE

YOUTH MET THE YOUNG MAN... WELL, READ ON FOR YOURSELF, FRIEND!



PLAYING STILL WITH YOUR MUD AND STICKS, EH, BOY?

PERHAPS FOR THE LAST TIME, GRANDFATHER... TONIGHT I WILL SEEK OUT THE GREAT ALEXANDER AND SHOW HIM MY STATUES!



ALEX...? HIS ARMIES CAMP IN THE VALLEY ON THE WAY TO WAR. HIS SENTRIES WOULD CUT YOU DOWN BEFORE YOU CAME WITHIN A HUNDRED YARDS OF THE MACEDON

I MUST TAKE THAT CHANCE. ONLY ALEXANDER CAN GET ME APPOINTED TO LYSIPPUS' TUTELAGE! IF I MUST, I WILL DIE TRYING!



AND WITH THE OBSTINACY AND DETERMINATION OF YOUTH, THE WOULD-BE SCULPTOR LEFT HIS HUT AND WENT DOWN INTO THE VALLEY, IGNORING THE RAIN AND COLD...







ALEXANDER! SIRE!
VULCAN HAS GONE
MAD! FIRE
ENCIRCLES
US! THERE
IS NO
ESCAPE!

QUICKLY
ALEXANDER,
OR ALL IS
LOST!

VULCAN? THAT
LAZY... THE FATE
HADN'T STEPPED
IN... AW, SKIP
IT... VULCAN,
HA!



FIND A WEAK SPOT! MAYHAP
SOME CAN BREAK THROUGH!
LIVELY, NOW!

MY HEAD,
WOW! NO NEED
TO BREAK
THROUGH, SIR...
I KNOW A
WAY TO
WALK
THROUGH!



WALK THROUGH?! BY THE GODS!
HAS FATE HIMSELF SENT US THIS
STRIPLING BOY AS A SAVIOUR?
NOW, BOY!? WHICH WAY?
COME! THERE
ARE THOUSANDS
TO ESCAPE!!

DID YOU HEAR
WHAT HE
SAID ABOUT
FATE? HMM,
A PRETTY NICE
GUY THAT
ALEXANDER!

T. THAT
WAY!



MY SACK!!
AFTER ALL
THIS, I'M NOT
LEAVING THAT
BEHIND!

THE WORLD BURN-
ING AND HE
WANTS A
SACK! HA!



OBVIOUSLY, THE KID GOT THE
ARMY OUT... HOW? AN OLD
CAVE RAN UNDER THE CUL-
DE-SAC AND... ANYWAY, THEY
GOT OUT AND LATER THAT
NIGHT...

...AND IF I
COULD STUDY
WITH YOUR
MASTER SCULPTOR
LYSIPPUS...

A LIKELY STORY!
THAT SACK PROBABLY
CONTAINS A NEW
WEAPON!



WELL, SIR, MAYBE SOMEDAY
THEY WILL BE... A NEW
WEAPON FOR SHOWING
THE TRUTH!

WELL,
SENTRY?

!?



HA-HA! I'M NO JUDGE OF ART BUT
AS A WEAPON FOR TRUTH I'LL BE
GLAD TO APPRENTICE
YOU TO LYSIPPUS!
SENTRY! I CHARGE
YOU WITH ESCORTING
OUR YOUNG FRIEND
HERE BACK TO
MACEDON...
SEEING AS HOW
YOU--AH--
DISCOVERED
HIM!

HE DIS-
COVERED
ME, SIR!
THE
RASCAL!

JUST
FATE!



FOOLED YOU! YOU THOUGHT THE STORY WAS OVER, EH? **FAR FROM IT!** ALEXANDER WENT ON WITH HIS WARS, THE YOUNG SCULPTOR WAS BOUND OVER TO THE GREAT LYSIPPUS

FOR STUDY. YEARS PASSED, AND IN 306 B.C. ONE **DEMETRIUS POLIOCETES** WON A SMASHING VICTORY OVER PTOLEMY, THE EGYPTIAN.

THE POPULACE, OF COURSE, WENT ALL OUT TO WELCOME HOME THE CONQUERING HERO, MAKING A PARADE DOWN WALL STREET LOOK LIKE AN AIR RAID DRILL! WHY, THEY EVEN COMMISSIONED THE LEADING SCULPTOR TO SCULPT A SPECIAL STATUE TO THE VICTORY!

THE TOWN FATHERS COULD HARDLY WAIT TO SHOW DEMETRIUS THE STATUE AND KIND OF HURRIED THROUGH THE REST OF THE SHOW... FINALLY, THE MOMENT CAME...



WAIT! HOLD THE UNVEILING! **THAT MAN!** I'VE SEEN HIM BEFORE! I KNOW HIM! **YOU THERE!** DO YOU KNOW ME?

S-SHOULD I, SIR?

SHOULD YOU?! YOU YOUNG PUP! ON MY VERY FIRST COMMAND WITH ALEXANDER YOU SENT **ME** AND MY DIGNITY SPRAWLING IN THE MUD! I WAS THAT FURIOUS SENTRY THAT WOULD HAVE HAD YOUR HEAD IF **FATE** HADN'T BOWLED US BOTH OVER WITH A LIGHTNING BOLT! AND THANK THE GODS HE DID!! **HERE!** SHOW ME YOUR STATUE, MY YOUNG FRIEND!



IT... IT'S BEAUTIFUL! **BEAUTIFUL!** WHAT DO YOU CALL IT, SON?

NIKE OF SAMOTHRACE!



AND THAT'S IT! IF YOU NOTICED, THE YOUNG SCULPTOR WAS CALLED A LOT OF THINGS, BUT **NEVER** BY NAME... THAT'S BECAUSE **NO ONE KNOWS** WHO REALLY DID FASHION ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS STATUES!... OR MAYBE I SHOULD SAY, **NO ONE KNEW** UNTIL NOW... BUT **WE KNOW, EH?!**



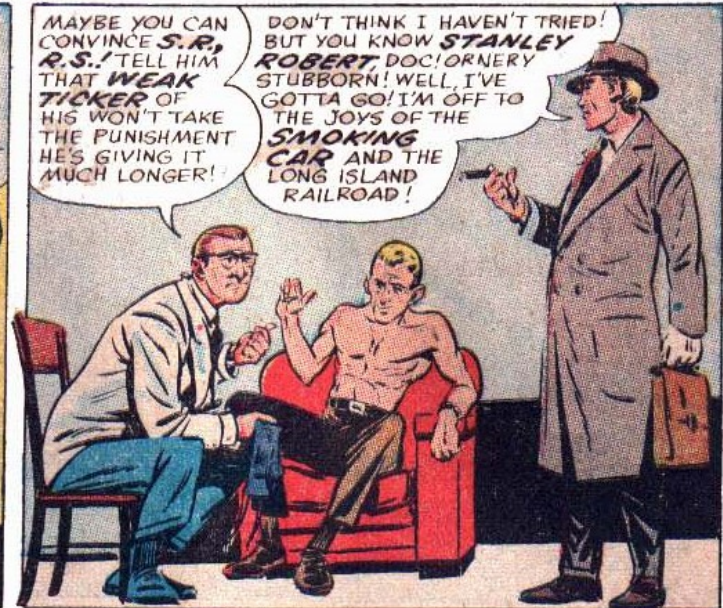
THE END

THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

PART 1



DID YOU EVER CONSIDER HOW **LITTLE THINGS** CAN CHANGE A WHOLE SERIES OF EVENTS? EVEN BE THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN LIFE AND DEATH? HERE'S A STORY TO ILLUSTRATE THE POINT... IT'S OF TWO BROTHERS WITH THE **SAME INITIALS** EXCEPT IN **REVERSE!**



MAYBE YOU CAN CONVINCE **S.R.**, **R.S.**! TELL HIM THAT **WEAK TICKER** OF HIS WON'T TAKE THE PUNISHMENT HE'S GIVING IT MUCH LONGER!

DON'T THINK I HAVEN'T TRIED! BUT YOU KNOW **STANLEY ROBERT**, **DOC!** ORNERY STUBBORN! WELL, I'VE GOTTA GO! I'M OFF TO THE JOYS OF THE **SMOKING CAR** AND THE LONG ISLAND RAILROAD!



I THINK YOU WORRY TOO MUCH! I'M **ALL RIGHT!**

YOU'RE **NOT** ALL RIGHT! LISTEN TO **RALPH** AND ME, **STAN!** CUT OUT BADMINTON AND THE REST OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!

IF IT WAS ME, I'D **QUIT!!**

BUT **S.R.** DIDN'T TAKE HEED AND THAT DAY **DOC** SAW HIM GOING OFF TO THE GYM. SOMETHING HAD TO BE DONE... PERHAPS A STRONG LETTER WOULD DO IT!



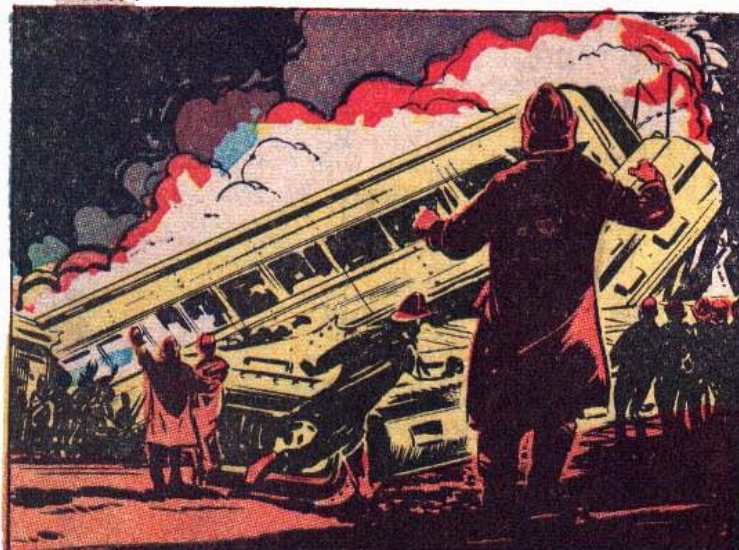
OH, **PHOOEY!** I PUT DOWN **RALPH'S** INITIALS INSTEAD OF **STAN'S**. **HA!** IF **RALPH** GOT THIS LETTER, HE... HE'D SWEAR OFF **SMOKING** I'LL BET... WELL... NOW TO **CHANGE IT!**



DOC SURE IS STEAMED UP!! ACCORDING TO HIM, I'VE GOT **ONE** FOOT IN THE GRAVE AND THE **OTHER** ON A BANANA PEEL!

MAYBE YOU'D BETTER LISTEN TO HIM AND **TAKE IT EASY!** WELL... OFF TO THE OLD ROUTINE!... EVERY DAY, DAY IN, DAY OUT, **SAME OLD SMOKING CAR...** **SAME OLD RIDE!**

SAME OLD CAR PERHAPS... BUT IT WASN'T THE **SAME OLD RIDE...** FOR ON THAT **NOVEMBER DAY** IN **1950** OCCURRED ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC ACCIDENTS IN **COMMUTER TRAIN HISTORY!**



AND AS IN MANY, MANY HOMES THAT NIGHT, **SORROW** LAY HEAVY IN THE **GOE HOUSE...**



IT WAS **GHASTLY**, **STAN!** **GHASTLY!** THE CAR THAT **RALPH** WAS IN WAS **SMASHED** TO BITS! HE NEVER HAD A CHANCE!!

FATE IS IRONICAL, ISN'T IT?... **RALPH**, **HEALTHY** AND **STRONG**, GETTING **SNUFFED OUT** LIKE A **CANDLE--** AND HERE I AM, **LEAKY PUMP** AND **ALL, STILL ALIVE!!**

THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

PART 2



... BUT BEGINS TO CHANGE WHEN WE GET TO THE PART WHERE THE DOCTOR SEES S.R. GOING TO THE GYM...



AND LIKE THE LAST TIME, THE DOCTOR MADE THE SAME MISTAKE!

BUT BEFORE THE DOCTOR COULD MAKE THE CORRECTION, A NURSE BURST INTO HIS OFFICE...

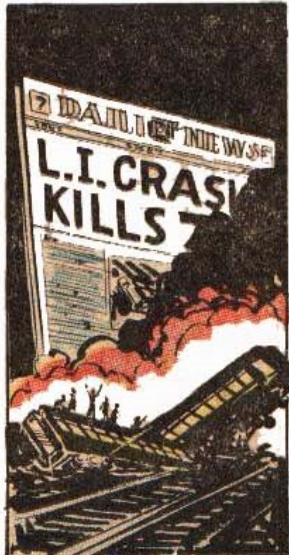
THERE THE MISADDRESSED ENVELOPE WAS SITTING WHEN THE DOCTOR'S PRETTY RECEPTIONIST CHANCED BY...



AND SO IT WAS MAILED... MAILED TO R.S. COE... RALPH COE... INSTEAD OF S.R. COE FOR WHOM IT WAS INTENDED. THE NEXT DAY, ON THE TRAIN...

WELL, IT WAS THE SAME DATE... AND THE SAME TRAGIC ACCIDENT OCCURRED!

BUT THIS TIME THE STORY ENDED WITH A SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT TWIST!



IF I HADN'T READ THAT LETTER DOC INTENDED FOR YOU, GOTTEN SCARED AND SWORN OFF SMOKING, I COULD HAVE BEEN DEAD RIGHT NOW!! ONLY PASSENGERS IN THE FIRST AND LAST CARS WERE KILLED! THE FIRST AND LAST CARS... THE SMOKING CARS!!

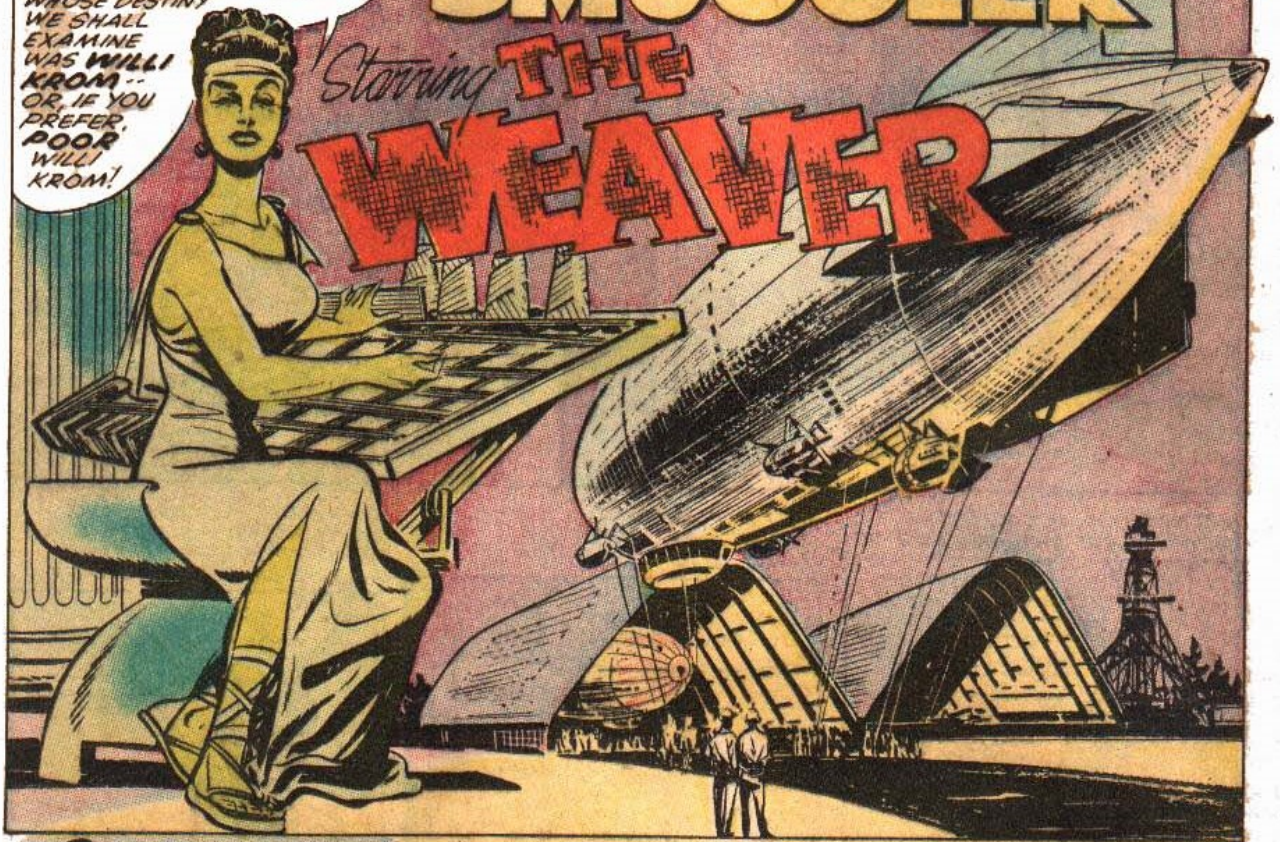


THE END

I AM THE WEAVER... MY PATTERNS OF LIFE'S THREADS POINT THE WAY TO PEOPLE'S DESTINIES...AND ONE SUCH, WHOSE DESTINY WE SHALL EXAMINE WAS WILLI KROM... OR, IF YOU PREFER, POOR WILLI KROM!

SMUGGLER

Starring THE WEAVER



GERMANY, 1937... STARTING THEIR EXPERIMENTS IN LIGHTER-THAN-AIR DIRIGIBLES BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR WITH THE FAMED ZEPPELINS, GERMAN ENGINEERS CULMINATED THEIR YEARS OF STUDY AND RESEARCH IN THE FINEST DIRIGIBLE AFLOAT...THE MAGNIFICENT **HINDENBURG...**

BUT TO DIGRESS FOR THE MOMENT, A MINOR EXECUTIVE OF THE AIRDRÔME NAMED WILLI KROM WAS JUST THEN TRYING TO FLOAT A LITTLE DEAL OF HIS OWN WITH A SLIGHTLY...ER... "HEALTHY" YOUNG LADY NAMED ELSA...



I LOVE YOU, ELSA! MARRY ME! KISS ME!

!!?



WE CAN FLY AWAY TOGETHER AND BILL AND COOOOOO!

I'LL BILL AND COO YOU, YOU...!

WHAD!



DO YOU THINK I'D HAVE ANYTHING TO DO WITH A LITTLE PIPSQUEAK LIKE YOU WHO DOESN'T EVEN HAVE A PFENNIG! HA! YOU'D HAVE TO HAVE A MILLION BEFORE I'D MARRY YOU! NOW GET OUT!! AND DON'T COME BACK!!

CRUSHED, POOR WILLI RETURNED TO HIS JOB IN THE GIGANTIC DIRIGIBLE HANGARS AT FRIEDRICHSHAVEN AIRDRÖME.

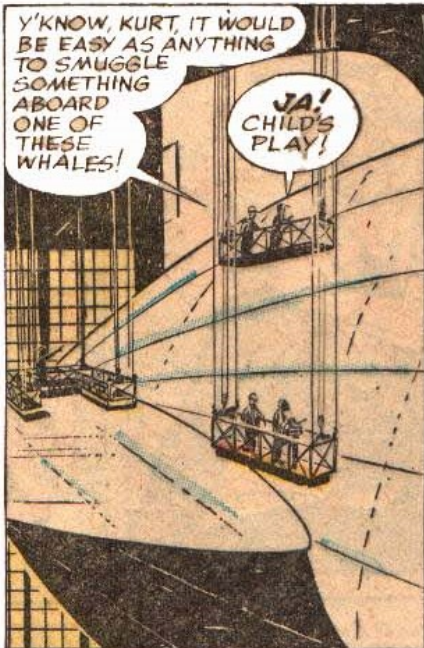
YOU'RE THE **BEST CARGO INSPECTOR** WE HAVE, KROM! IT'S YOUR DOING THAT THE LOADS ARE PACKED PROPERLY... AND THAT NOTHING GETS **SMUGGLED ABOARD!** KEEP UP THE GOOD WORK!

THANK YOU, SIR.



Y'KNOW, KURT, IT WOULD BE EASY AS ANYTHING TO **SMUGGLE** SOMETHING ABOARD ONE OF THESE **WHALES!**

JA! CHILD'S PLAY!



OVER MY DEAD BODY! GET WORKING AND CUT OUT THAT KIND OF TALK!!

ACH! JUST A JOKE WILLI!

HEY, WILLI! TELEPHONE!



HELLO... WILLI??

THIS IS **ELSA**... HOW'D YOU LIKE TO COME OVER THIS EVENING, **LIEBCHEN**? HMMMM?

COME OVER?! TONIGHT?... LIKE TO?? **WOW!!** YOU BET! TONIGHT! LOVE TO!



AND THUS THE DICE WERE TOSSED... WILLI WENT TO SEE **ELSA**... WHICH WAS... OR WAS NOT, A MISTAKE, DEPENDING ON YOUR POINT OF VIEW...

I'M SORRY I WAS SO NASTY THE OTHER DAY WILLI, BUT YOU'RE SO **ATTRACTIVE** AND A GIRL HAS TO BE **CAREFUL!**

ATTRACTIVE? CAREFUL?



OF COURSE, WILLI! A MAN SWEEPS A GIRL OFF HER FEET AND THEY GET MARRIED... BUT WHAT DO THEY USE FOR **MONEY?**!

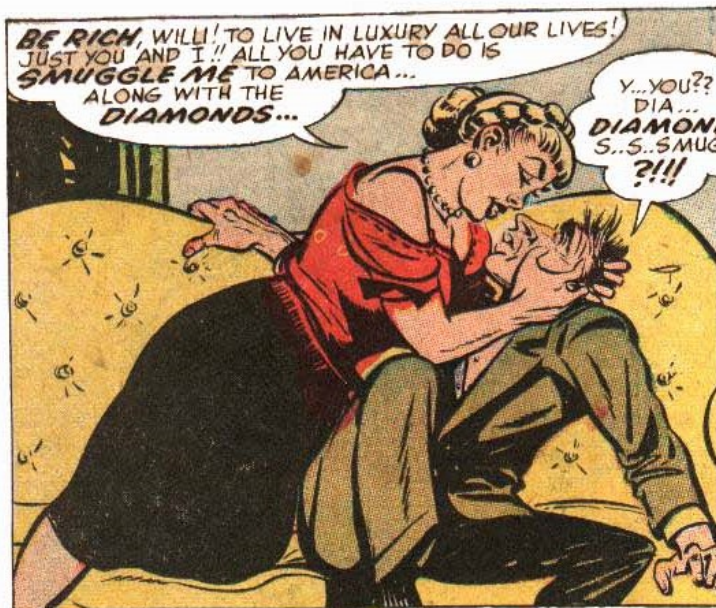
I... I'M A LOADING INSPECTOR... IT'S A **GOOD JOB**... IT PAYS WELL...



JA! JA! BUT NOT ENOUGH, WILLI! NOT NEARLY ENOUGH! WE WANT TO LIVE IN **LUXURY**... ON EASY STREET... JUST YOU AND ME... AND I KNOW OF A **WAY** WE CAN DO IT!

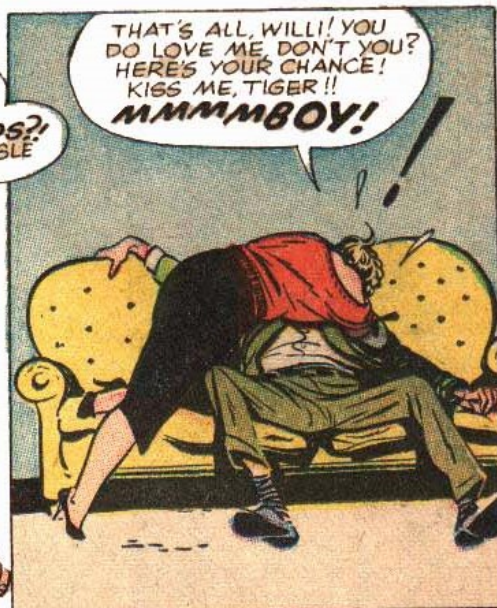
WAY? WHAT? "IT"? DO IT? WHAT? DO WHAT?





BE RICH, WILLI! TO LIVE IN LUXURY ALL OUR LIVES! JUST YOU AND I!! ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS SMUGGLE ME TO AMERICA... ALONG WITH THE DIAMONDS...

Y...YOU?? DIA... DIAMONDS?! S...S...SMUGGLE?!!



THAT'S ALL, WILLI! YOU DO LOVE ME, DON'T YOU? HERE'S YOUR CHANCE! KISS ME, TIGER!! MMMBOY!

POOR WILLI, COMPLETELY BEFUDDLED BY ELSA'S SUDDEN ARDOR WAS READY TO DO ANYTHING!! ANYTHING AT ALL!!



GOODNIGHT, MY BELOVED! DON'T FORGET TO GET THINGS READY! I WON'T...

TO GET THINGS READY!

WHAT AN ACTRESS YOU ARE, MY LITTLE LIEBCHEN! YOU HAVE THAT POOR FISH TIED AROUND YOUR FINGER! IST GUTE! NOW TOMORROW I WILL GIVE YOU THE JEWELS TO HIDE ABOARD THE HINDENBURG. THEN YOU GO WITH HIM TO AMERICA... I WILL FOLLOW BY SHIP. WE WILL GET RID OF HIM THERE, SELL THE DIAMONDS AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER! NIEN?

JA! JA, CARL!! IT SOUNDS WONDERFUL! ACH! THAT WILLI! WHAT A DUMBKOPF!!



THAT "DUMBKOPF" WASN'T SO DUMB IN HIS PREPARATIONS TO SMUGGLE HIS GIRL AND THE LOOT TO AMERICA THOUGH, AND CAREFULLY LAYING HIS PLANS CARRIED THEM OUT TO THE "T."

HIS JOB CALLED FOR HIS INSPECTING THE LOADED CARGOES AND THIS HE DID WITH TEUTONIC THOROUGHNESS... ESPECIALLY IN THE TAIL OF THE SHIP...

THERE HE CAREFULLY, METHODICALLY FOUND JUST THE SPOT AND REMOVING A SMALL BROWN BOX FROM HIS SMOCK, HE SLIPPED IT INTO AN OBSCURE GIRDER...



READY FOR INSPECTION, HANS?

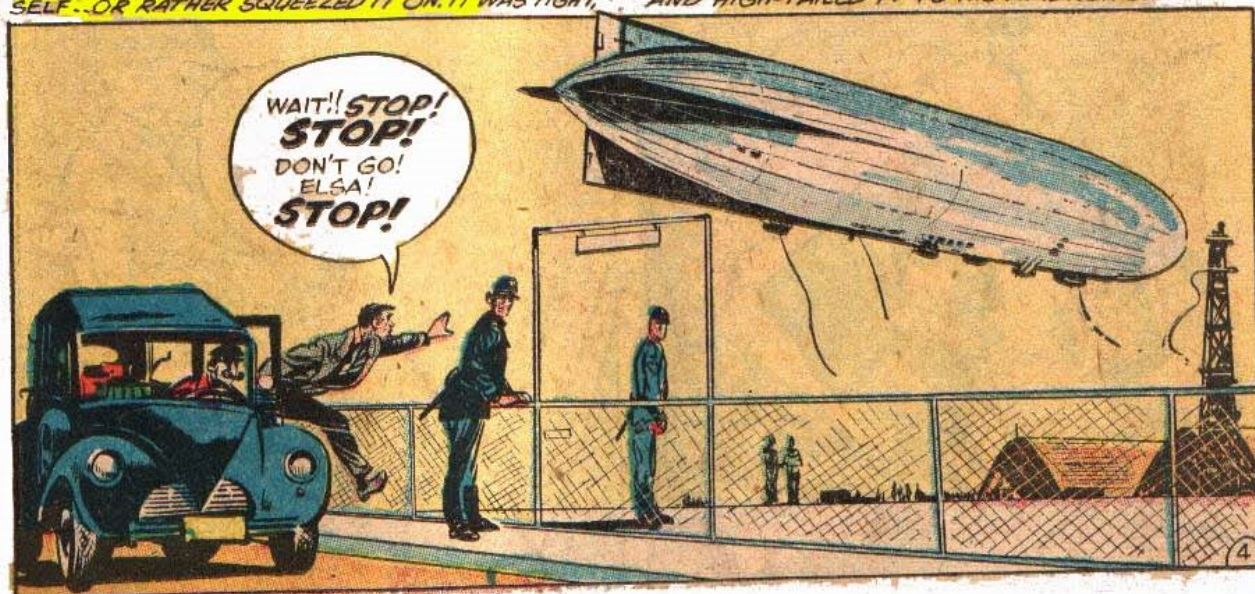
JA, WILLI... EVERYTHING'S LOADED! SHE'S ALL YOURS!





THERE WAS NO TIME TO WASTE! CARL REMOVED WILLI'S UNIFORM AND THEN SLIPPED IT ON HIMSELF...OR RATHER SQUEEZED IT ON. IT WAS TIGHT.

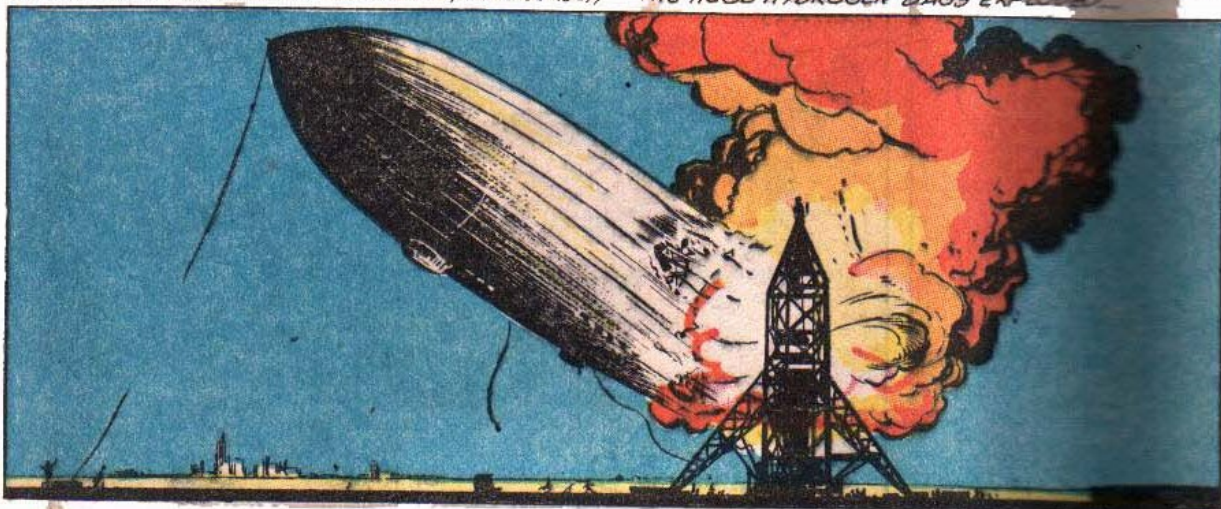
BUT IT WOULD DO...AND IT DID. ABOUT AN HOUR LATER, WILLI AWOKES, THREW ON CARL'S CLOTHES AND HIGH-TAILED IT TO THE AIRDRÖME...





HISTORICAL FACT: AFTER A ROUTINE CROSSING OF THE ATLANTIC THE GREAT GERMAN DIRIGIBLE, HINDENBURG ARRIVED AT LAKEHURST, NEW JERSEY,

TO COMPLETE HER TWENTY-FIRST TRIP SUDDENLY, WITHOUT WARNING, FIRE BROKE OUT! INSTANTLY, THE HUGE HYDROGEN BAGS EXPLODED...



AND IN SIXTY SECONDS WHAT HAD BEEN THE WORLD'S GREATEST LIGHTER-THAN-AIR SHIP WAS ONLY A MASS OF TWISTED, MOLTEN METAL!



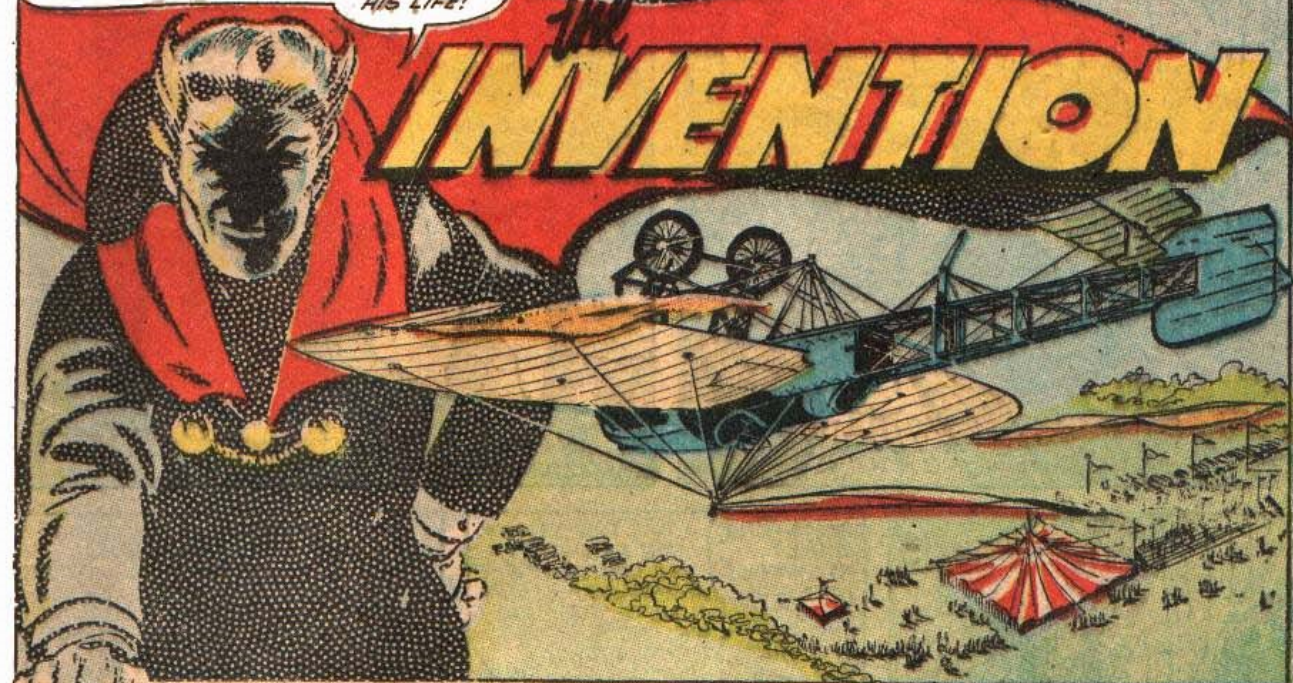
WELL, AS THEY SAY, THAT'S THE WAY THE COOKIE CRUMBLES! ELSA AND FRIEND WERE AMONG THE MISSING AND STILL ARE! THE DIAMONDS WERE NEVER FOUND... WILLI KROM BEING WILLI KROM TOLD ALL TO THE POLIZEI BUT THEY LET HIM GO... NO EVIDENCE! TODAY, TWENTY YEARS LATER, WILLI STILL LIVES ON, WITH HIS MEMORIES... HIS MEMENTOS... AND WONDERS WHAT QUEER FATE KEPT HIM FROM TAKING THAT FLIGHT IN 1937!



LIKE YOU AND YOU, ROLAND GARROS, THE FAMOUS STUNT FLYER HAD NO IDEA OF WHAT FATE HAD IN STORE FOR HIM... AND ROLAND GARROS DIDN'T MUCH CARE... BUT WELL HE MIGHT HAVE CARED, FOR FATE WAS TO PLAY A LARGE ROLE IN HIS LIFE!

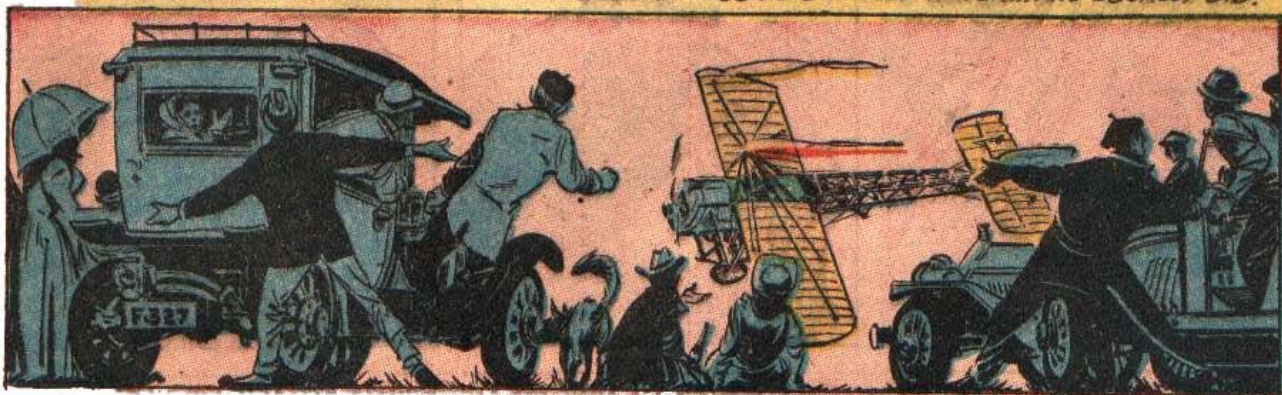
MAN in BLACK

the INVENTION



FLYING BEFORE THE FIRST WORLD WAR WAS A RISK EVEN UNDER IDEAL CIRCUMSTANCES... AND WHEN A CRAZY CHARACTER LIKE GARROS

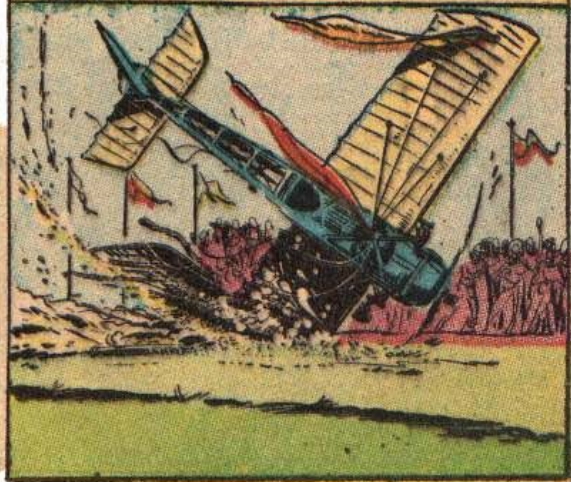
WAS WILLING TO DO STUNTS IN THESE FLIMSY BIRD CAGES, ALL OF PARIS WAS READY TO COME OUT AND WATCH... AND USUALLY DID!



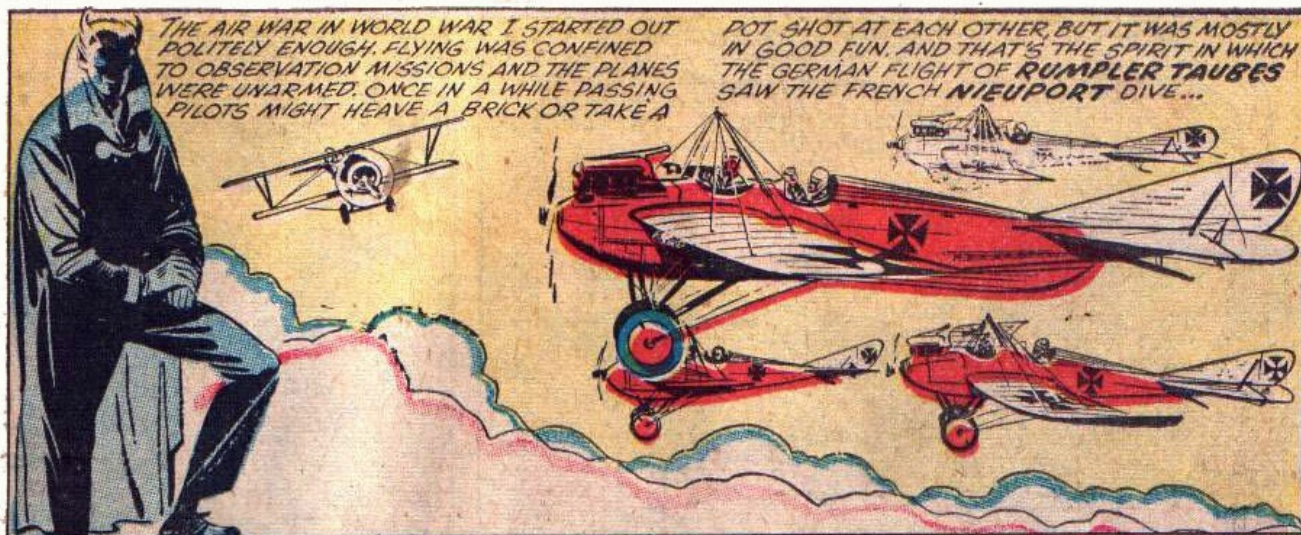
PICKING UP HANDKERCHIEFS WITH A WING TIP WAS ALWAYS A CROWD PLEASER, SO GARROS ALWAYS OBLIGED AND THIS DAY WAS LIKE ALWAYS...

BUT SUDDENLY, STRANGELY, A ROOT... AN ORDINARY OLD TREE ROOT POPPED OUT OF THE GROUND!

PERHAPS THE VIBRATION FROM THE ENGINE... OR THE WING GRAZING THE GROUND... OR...! ANYWAY, FATE DECREED THAT THAT ROOT SHOULD POP UP JUST THEN AND...



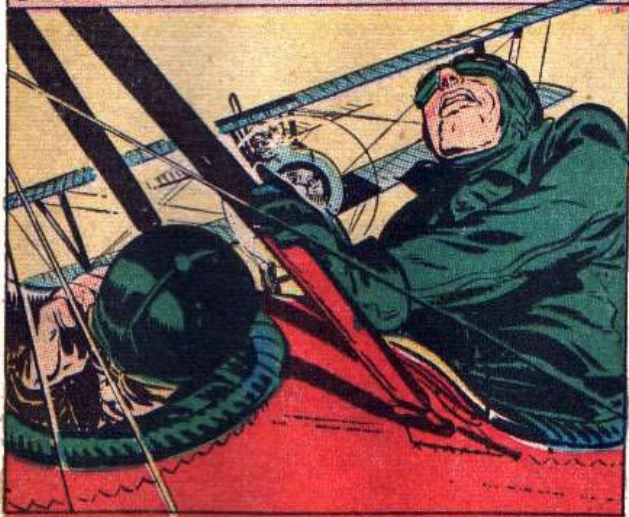




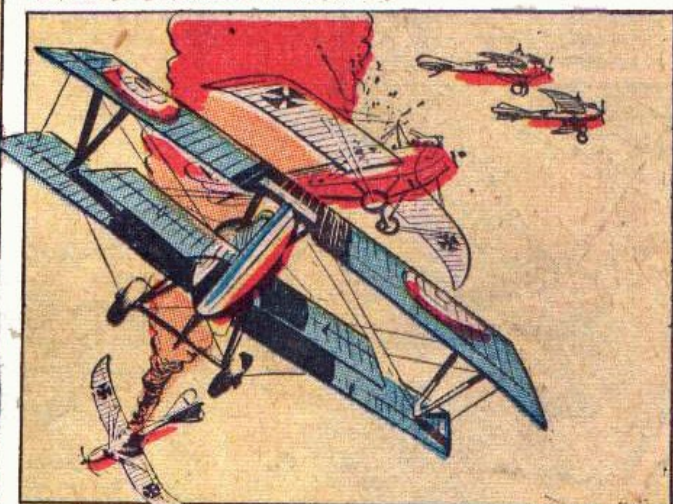
THE AIR WAR IN WORLD WAR I STARTED OUT POLITELY ENOUGH. FLYING WAS CONFINED TO OBSERVATION MISSIONS AND THE PLANES WERE UNARMED. ONCE IN A WHILE PASSING PILOTS MIGHT HEAVE A BRICK OR TAKE A

POT SHOT AT EACH OTHER, BUT IT WAS MOSTLY IN GOOD FUN. AND THAT'S THE SPIRIT IN WHICH THE GERMAN FLIGHT OF RUMPLER TAUBES SAW THE FRENCH NIEUPOINT DIVE...

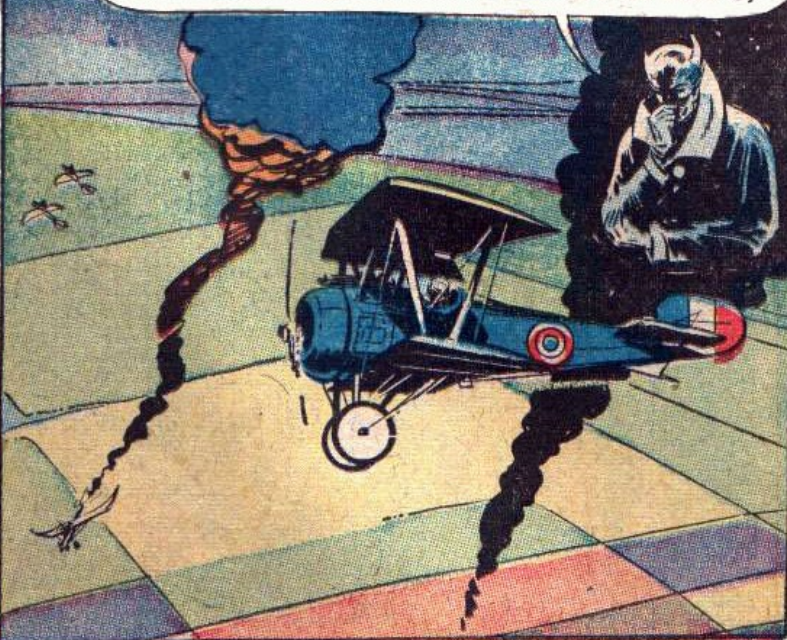
DETERMINED THEY WOULDN'T LET THE LITTLE SILVERY-BLUE PLANE BLUFF THEM, THE SMILING GERMANS STEADFASTLY KEPT IN FORMATION... BUT THE FRENCH PILOT WASN'T BLUFFING...



WHERE DID THE SHOTS COME FROM? THE NOSE, OBVIOUSLY! BUT THROUGH THE PROPELLER? IMPOSSIBLE!! SURPRISED... AMAZED... THE GERMAN BOYS HESITATED... AND THEN AGAIN THE NIEUPOINT'S NOSE LIGHTED UP AGAIN IN BRIGHT LITTLE ORANGE FLASHES!



PRUDENTLY THE OTHER GERMANS DOVE FOR HOME... AND AWAY FROM THIS DIABOLICAL CONTRAPTION THAT COULD MAKE AN AIRCRAFT ONE BIG DEADLY WEAPON! THE PATTY CAKE WAR WAS OVER. NOW IT WAS FOR KEEPS!

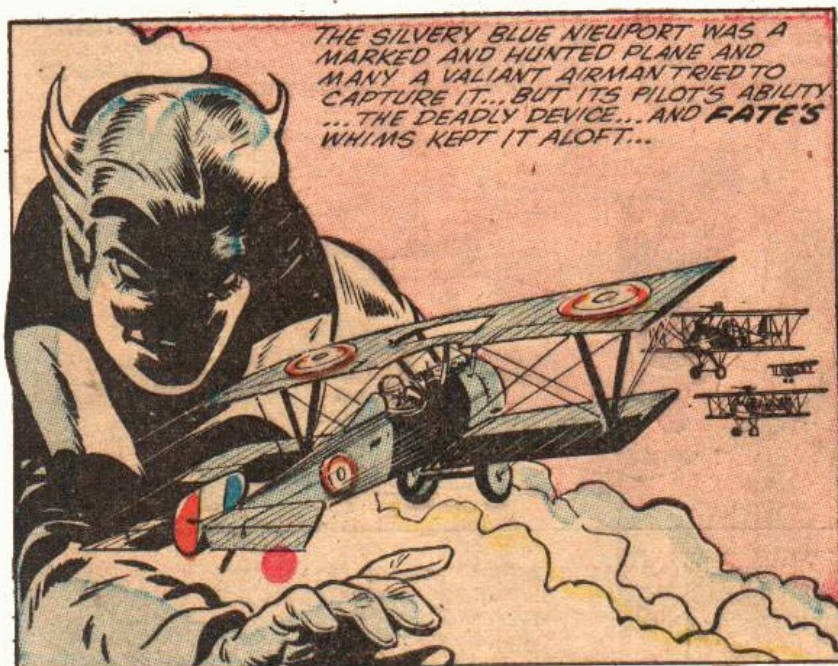


TWO PLANES LOST! A MACHINE GUN THAT COULD SHOOT PAST A SPINNING PROPELLER! THIS WAS UNHEARD OF!!! A REALLY SERIOUS DEVELOPMENT!



... IT GIVES THEM A REMARKABLE ADVANTAGE! OUR FORCES WILL BE SHOT OUT OF THE SKIES!

THEN WE MUST HAVE THIS DEVICE, TOO! SPARE NOTHING UNTIL IT'S OURS!



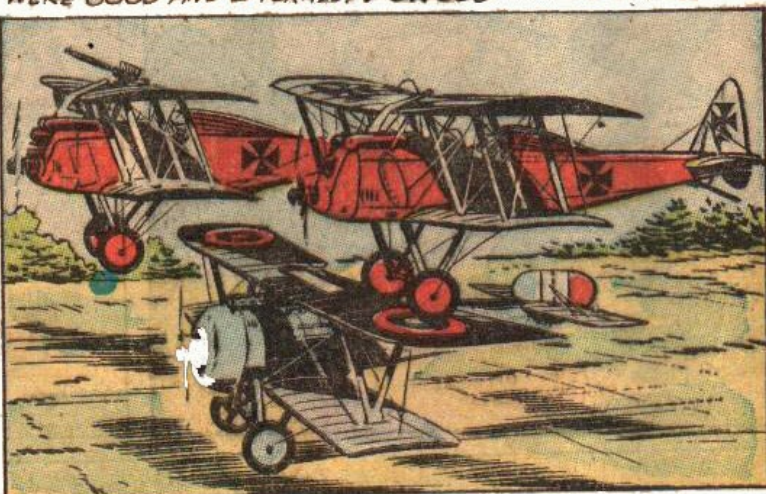
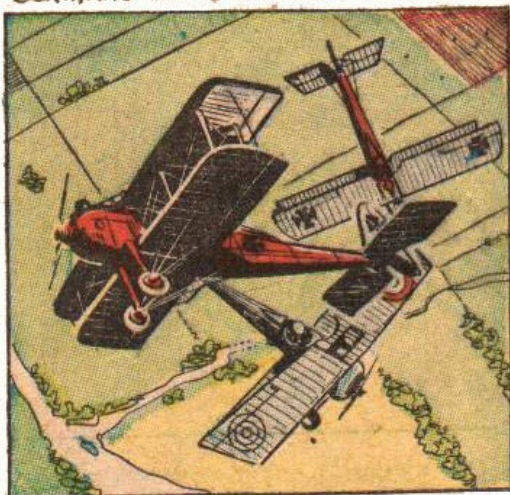
THE SILVERY BLUE NIEUPORT WAS A MARKED AND HUNTED PLANE AND MANY A VALIANT AIRMAN TRIED TO CAPTURE IT... BUT ITS PILOT'S ABILITY... THE DEADLY DEVICE... AND FATE'S WHIMS KEPT IT ALOFT...

ONE DAY FATE DECIDED "ENOUGH" AND AS THE FRENCHMAN WAS ABOUT TO FIRE A CARTRIDGE IN THE STICK BELT HEAVED UP...

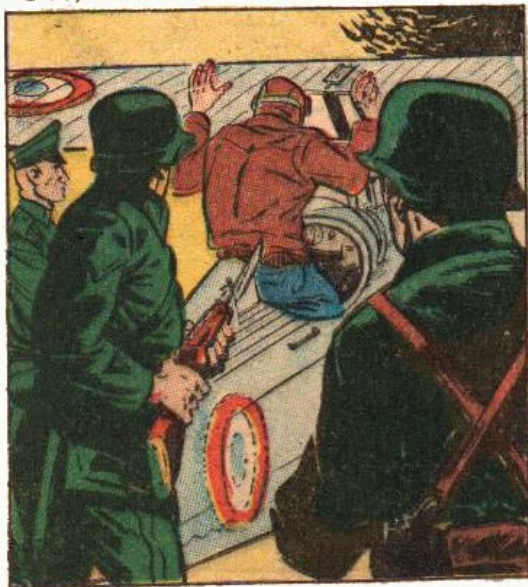


AND **DEU!** THE GUN WAS HOPELESSLY JAMMED! HERE WAS THE CHANCE THE GERMANS WERE WAITING FOR...

MAKE NO MISTAKE! THE FRENCHMAN TRIED EVERY TRICK IN THE BOOK TO GET AWAY BUT THESE **HALBERSTADT** PILOTS WERE GOOD AND LITERALLY **FORCED** HIM TO LAND!



ROLAND GARROS MOVED QUICKLY, BUT HE HARDLY HAD TIME TO GET OUT OF HIS COCKPIT, MUCH LESS TO SET FIRE TO IT, WHEN A PATROL HAD HIM COLD!



YOU MUST KEEP IN MIND THAT IN THOSE EARLY WAR YEARS PILOTS HAD A HIGH CHIVALROUS CODE... ALMOST LIKE JOUSTING KNIGHTS IN AGES PAST... AND A CAPTURED PILOT WAS NO LONGER AN ENEMY... HE WAS A FELLOW AIRMAN... **AN HONORED GUEST!**

EEE HOO!
ROLAND GARROS!



THE FABULOUS GARROS! WE SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THE **WORLD'S GREATEST STUNT-MAN** WOULD PULL THE **WORLD'S GREATEST STUNT!** YOU'VE HAD US IN A PANIC!

ACHTUNG MEIN FREUNDLICH! BEHOLD! THE SECRET OF OUR HONORED GUEST IS ABOUT TO BE EXPOSED! **LOOK!**



SEE **THIS?** THE **NERVE** OF THE MAN! ALL HE DID WAS PUT STEEL-WEDGED SLEEVES WHERE HIS BULLETS HIT, AND BOUNCED THEM AT US!

IT'S A WONDER THE PROPELLER DIDN'T SHATTER FROM THE VIBRATION!

DIDN'T THE BULLETS RICOCHET BACK AT YOU TOO?

...OR THE ENGINE!



MERDE! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT! **SO EASY!** SO SIMPLE! SO...

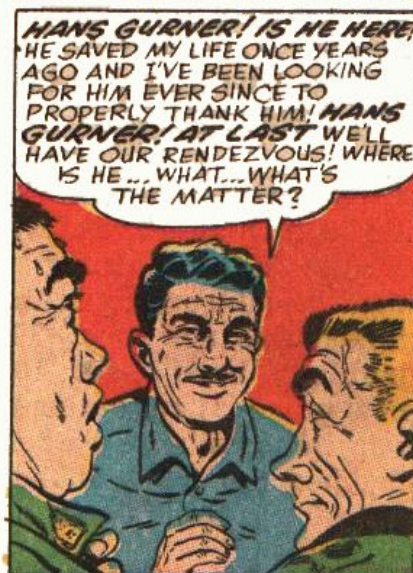
SO DANGEROUS! IF FATE HADN'T BEEN KIND TO YOU, GARROS, YOU COULD HAVE KILLED YOURSELF!

AH, BUT I DIDN'T!



AND YOU MUST ADMIT, MES AMI, IT WAS SUCCESSFUL!

HAW! HAW! INDEED SO! POOR VON GRAF AND **HANS GURNER** CAN ATTEST TO THAT!



HANS GURNER! IS HE HERE! HE SAVED MY LIFE ONCE YEARS AGO AND I'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR HIM EVER SINCE TO PROPERLY THANK HIM! **HANS GURNER! AT LAST** WE'LL HAVE OUR RENDEZVOUS! WHERE IS HE... WHAT... WHAT'S THE MATTER?



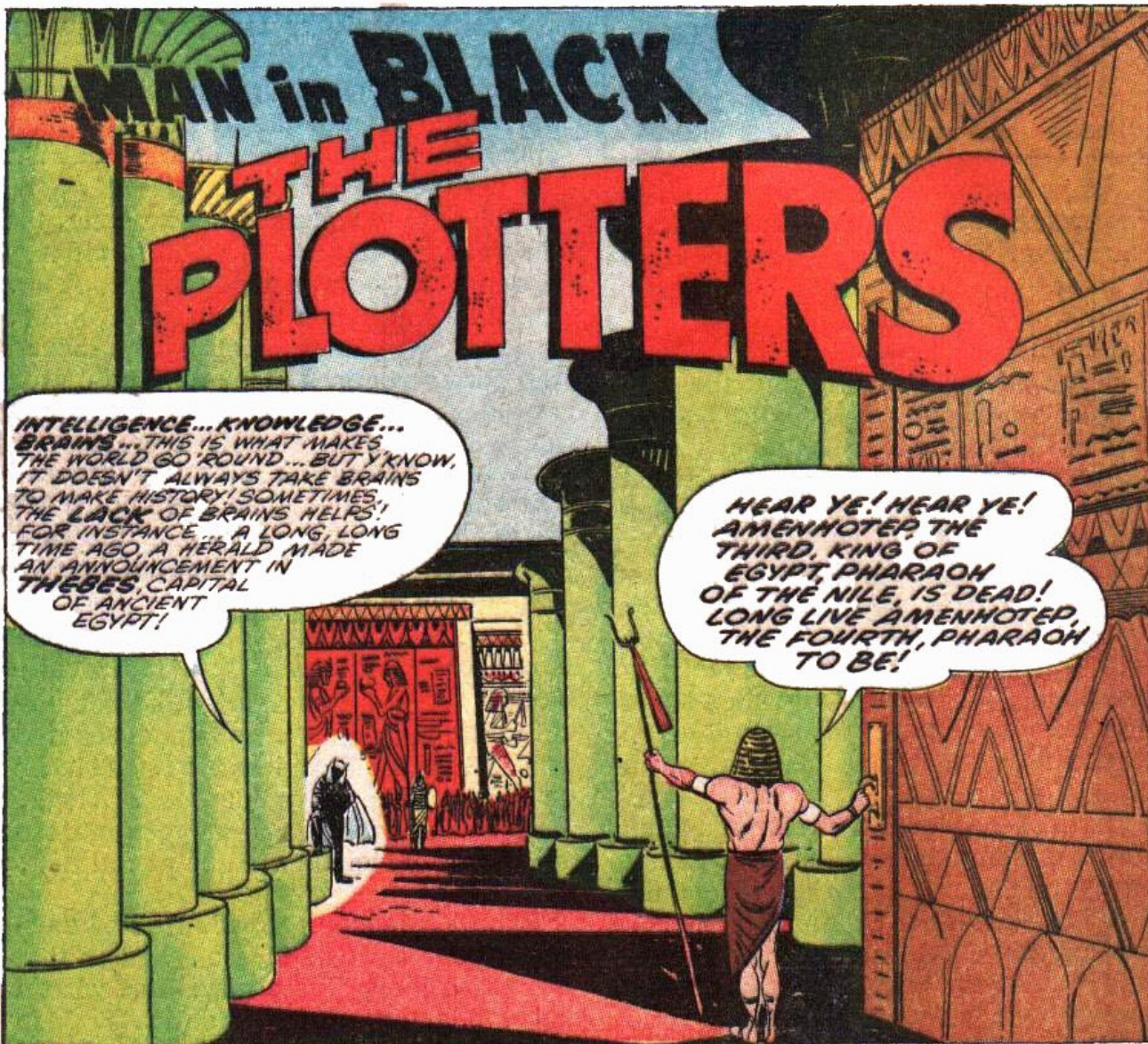
FORGIVE YOUNG KRAUSE, HERR GARROS! WE GERMANS USUALLY HAVE BETTER MANNERS THAN TO GO BLURTING OUT THE NAMES OF THE **GLORIOUS DEAD!** I'M SORRY, BUT HANS WAS THE FIRST VICTIM OF YOUR AH... INVENTION! **ACH!** LA GUERRE, C'EST MISERABLE!

HA! DIDN'T THINK FATE WAS AROUND, EH? AND HERE WAS HIS LIL' OL' FICKLE FINGER AWAYING AND APOINTIN' ALL THE WHILE!



WELL... **THAT'S FATE FOR YOU!** OH... EPILOGUE: M'SIEU GARROS SPENT THE REST OF THE WAR IN A COMFORTABLE PRISON CAMP. HIS "INVENTION" WAS TURNED OVER TO A YOUNG DUTCH ENGINEER, NAMED **TONY FOKKER**, WHO PROMPTLY DISCARDED IT AND INVENTED A **SYNCHRONIZING MECHANISM** ENABLING A GUN TO FIRE BETWEEN THE WHIRLING PROPELLER BLADES... AN ADVANTAGE WHICH LIKE GARROS' ORIGINAL SCHEME, ALMOST KNOCKED THE ALLIES OUT OF THE AIR!! AH, ME!! C'EST LA GUERRE!!

THE END



INTELLIGENCE... KNOWLEDGE... BRAINS... THIS IS WHAT MAKES THE WORLD GO 'ROUND... BUT Y'KNOW, IT DOESN'T ALWAYS TAKE BRAINS TO MAKE HISTORY! SOMETIMES, THE LACK OF BRAINS HELPS! FOR INSTANCE... A LONG, LONG TIME AGO, A HERALD MADE AN ANNOUNCEMENT IN THEBES, CAPITAL OF ANCIENT EGYPT!

HEAR YE! HEAR YE! AMENHOTEP, THE THIRD, KING OF EGYPT, PHARAOH OF THE NILE, IS DEAD! LONG LIVE AMENHOTEP, THE FOURTH, PHARAOH TO BE!



WELL, THAT STARTED IT... TWO MINUTES LATER THE WHEELS OF INTRIGUE WERE BEARING DOWN...

YOUNG AMENHOTEP RETURNS TO THEBES TONIGHT. AT THE FIRST STAR HE WILL BE PROCLAIMED PHARAOH!

IF HE MAKES IT TO THEBES, THE YOUNG NINCOMPOOP! OUR PLANS ARE SET! WE STRIKE TONIGHT!!



GREETINGS, BELOVED OF THE THRONE! I LEAVE NOW TO ESCORT MY HUSBAND AMENHOTEP THE FOURTH, HOME TO THEBES... THRU THE LUXOR PASS!

DELIGHTFUL NEFERTITI, QUEEN OF QUEENS, WE WILL LOOK WITH JOY TO SEEING YOU THERE... AND YOUR ESTEEMED HUSBAND... AT EVENTIDE!

NICE LITTLE GROUP, EH? NOW IT WAS ABOUT THIS TIME THAT AN OLD SHEPHERD GAVE CAREFUL INSTRUCTIONS TO HIS SON... VERY CAREFUL INSTRUCTIONS, AS THE POOR LAD WAS A SIMPLETON...



NOW LISTEN TO ME CAREFULLY, AND WATCH!

OBSERVE THIS STONE... IT WILL BE A REMINDER... EVERY TIME YOU LOOK AT IT, IT WILL REMIND YOU TO TAKE THE FLOCK THRU THE PASS AT SUNSET!



NOW SIT HERE AND REMEMBER! AT SUNSET THE PASS! REMEMBER!



HEY! GET OFF!! WHAT IN--?

MEANWHILE, AT THE SAME PASS, THE THREE PLOTTERS HUDDLED, WAITING FOR THEIR INNOCENT VICTIM! YES, FATE WAS PRESENT, BUT HAD TO STAY CAREFULLY HIDDEN!!



THEY MUST ENTER THROUGH THERE WHEN THEY DO, WE WILL POUNCE ON THE YOUNG FOOL!

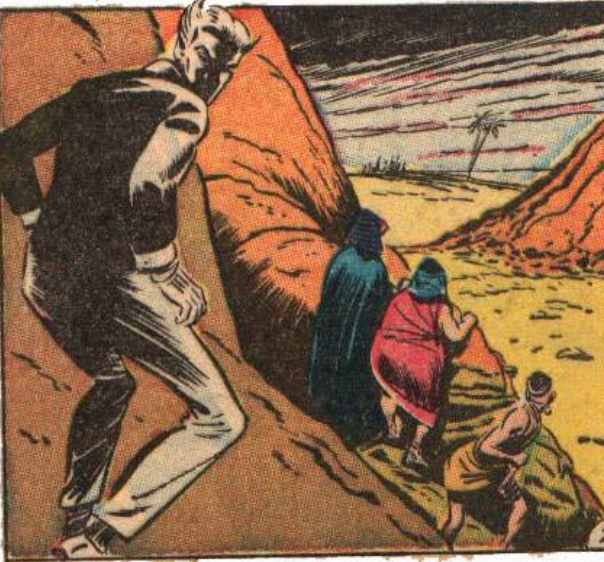
WHY HIDDEN? THAT KID WAS SCRUNCHED RIGHT DOWN ON THE CLOAK OF INVISIBILITY AND IT WAS LEFT BEHIND WHILE THE PASS WAS CARED TO SEE IF AIL WAS READY...



WHY DON'T THEY HURRY?! WE MUST COMPLETE OUR TASK BEFORE THE FIRST STAR IS OUT... AND NIGHT FALLS RAPIDLY! WAIT! LOOK! THEY COME!

IN PLENTY OF TIME BEFORE SUNSET!

DOGGONE! THIS WASN'T WHAT THE SCRIPT CALLED FOR AT ALL! IF AMENHOTEP ARRIVES BEFORE SUNSET, THE SHEPHERD WON'T GET HIS SHEEP HERE IN TIME... AND HISTORY MIGHT BE KNOCKED FOR A LOOP! FATE, OLD BOY, TAKE A HAND! BUT YOU'LL NEED THE CLOAK, SO SHOO BOY! GET CRACKING!!



ASLEEP! IF I AWAKEN HIM NOW, HE MIGHT FORGET BY SUNSET WHAT THE ROCK REMINDED HIM OF AND NEVER COME TO THE PASS! SO... CAREFUL... LIFT GENTLY...



... AND PULL REAL FAST!!



OH! OH! I WOBBLED THE STONE! IT'S GOING TO FALL... AND THAR SHE BLOWS!



RIGHT INTO HIS HAND! WHAT A CATCH! HMM! WOKE HIM UP TOO!



BUT ENOUGH OF THIS DILLY-DALLYING! FATE CAN NO LONGER WAIT UPON A SIMPLETON AND HIS STONE! WILL HE REMEMBER WHAT THE ROCK IS FOR? WILL ITS MESSAGE PERMEATE HIS FOG-BOUND MIND? TUNE IN ON THE NEXT PAGE AND FIND OUT... BUT MEANWHILE OFF TO THE JOB!



AH! TO THE TASK AT HAND! THE KING'S PARTY APPROACHES THE PASS MUCH TOO EARLY! HOW TO DELAY THEM UNTIL ALMOST NIGHTFALL?



UP! UP, LAZY REPTILE! AWAKE! EARN YOUR KEEP!

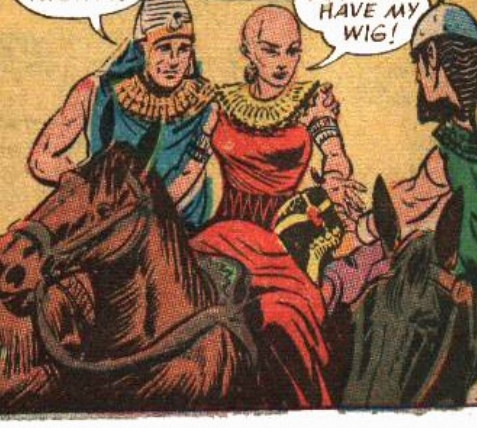


WHA...?! NEFERTITI! HER HORSE HAS BOLTED! QUICKLY!! AFTER HER! GO!



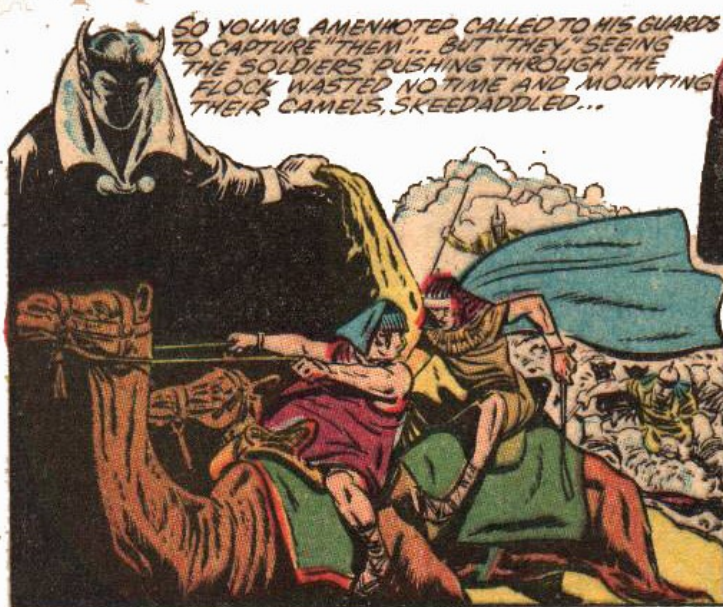
IT WAS QUITE A CHASE BUT AS THE DELAY NECESSARY FOR THIS STORY WAS ACCOMPLISHED, LET'S GLOSS OVER IT AND TELL YOU THAT THEY CAUGHT NEFERTITI'S HORSE JUST AS THE SUN SANK TO THE HORIZON...

ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?!



OF COURSE! HERE! LET ME HAVE MY WIG!

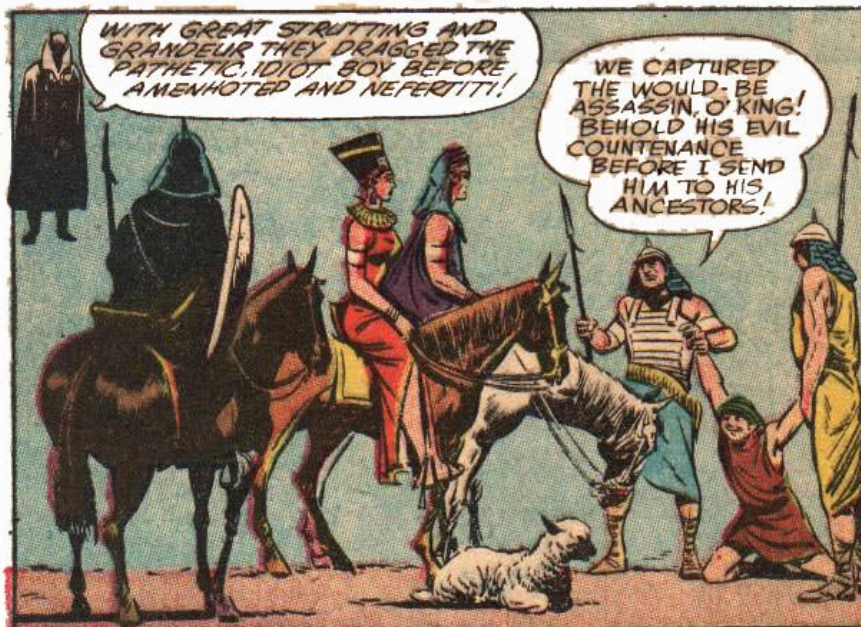




SO YOUNG AMENHOTEP CALLED TO HIS GUARDS TO CAPTURE "THEM"... BUT "THEY," SEEING THE SOLDIERS PUSHING THROUGH THE FLOCK WASTED NO TIME AND MOUNTING THEIR CAMELS, SKEEDADDLED...



AND THE GUARDS, ORDERED TO CAPTURE SOMEBODY AND FINDING THEIR QUARRY GONE, HAD TO PROTECT THEIR PROFESSIONAL REPUTATIONS BY BRINGING BACK SOMEONE... ANYONE... SO THEY POUNCED ON THE HAPLESS SHEPHERD...

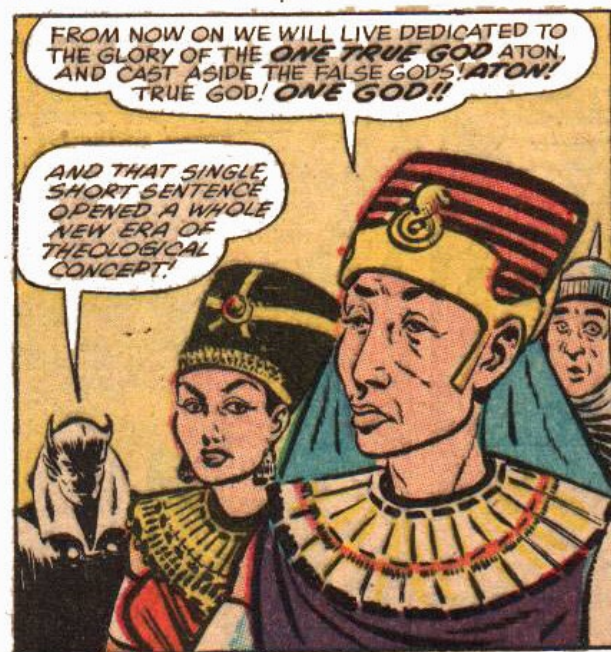


WITH GREAT STRUTTING AND GRANDEUR THEY DRAGGED THE PATHETIC, IDIOT BOY BEFORE AMENHOTEP AND NEFERTITI!

WE CAPTURED THE WOULD-BE ASSASSIN, O KING! BEHOLD HIS EVIL COUNTEenance BEFORE I SEND HIM TO HIS ANCESTORS!

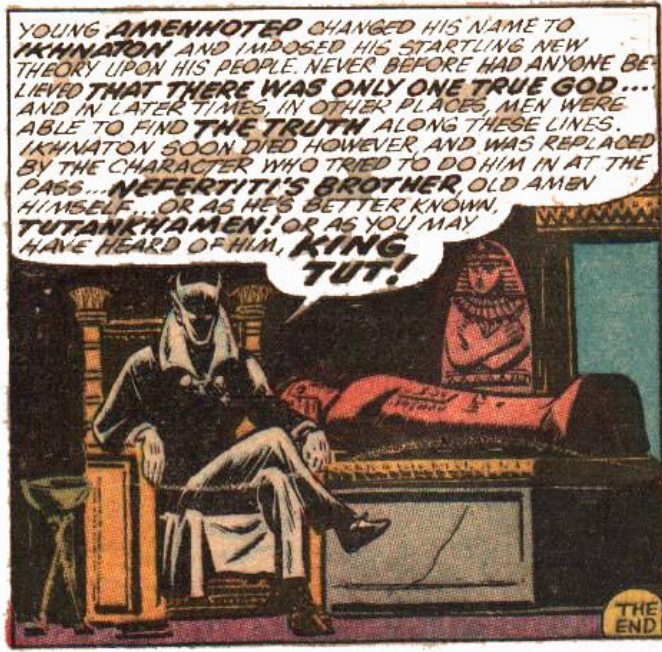


STAY YOUR HAND! BEHOLD THE FIRST STAR! I AM NOW PHARAOH! I AM DEDICATED TO MERCY AND LOVE AND MY FIRST ACT IS TO SPARE THE LIFE OF THIS BOY!



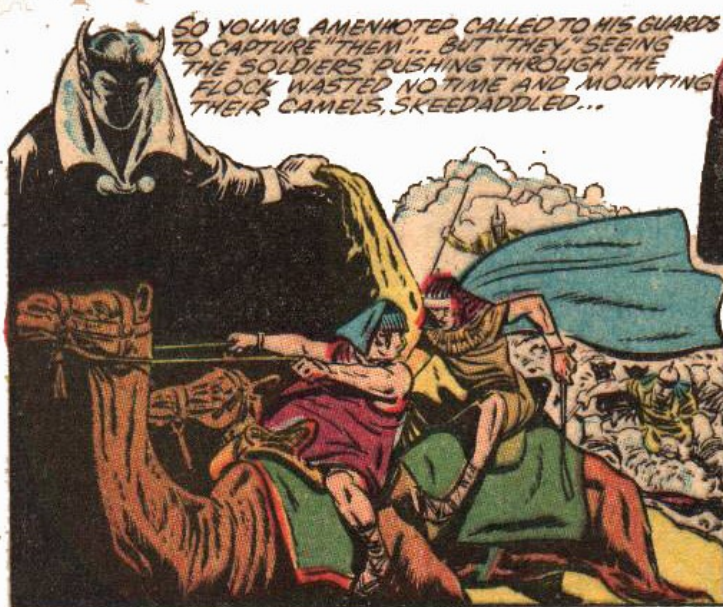
FROM NOW ON WE WILL LIVE DEDICATED TO THE GLORY OF THE **ONE TRUE GOD ATON**, AND CAST ASIDE THE FALSE GODS! **ATON! TRUE GOD! ONE GOD!!**

AND THAT SINGLE, SHORT SENTENCE OPENED A WHOLE NEW ERA OF THEOLOGICAL CONCEPT!



YOUNG AMENHOTEP CHANGED HIS NAME TO **IKHNATON** AND IMPOSED HIS STARTLING NEW THEORY UPON HIS PEOPLE. NEVER BEFORE HAD ANYONE BELIEVED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE TRUE GOD... AND IN LATER TIMES, IN OTHER PLACES, MEN WERE ABLE TO FIND THE TRUTH ALONG THESE LINES. IKHNATON SOON DIED HOWEVER, AND WAS REPLACED BY THE CHARACTER WHO TRIED TO DO HIM IN AT THE PASS... **NEFERTITI'S BROTHER, OLD AMEN HIMSELF... OR AS HE'S BETTER KNOWN, TUTANKHAMEN! OR AS YOU MAY HAVE HEARD OF HIM, KING TUT!**

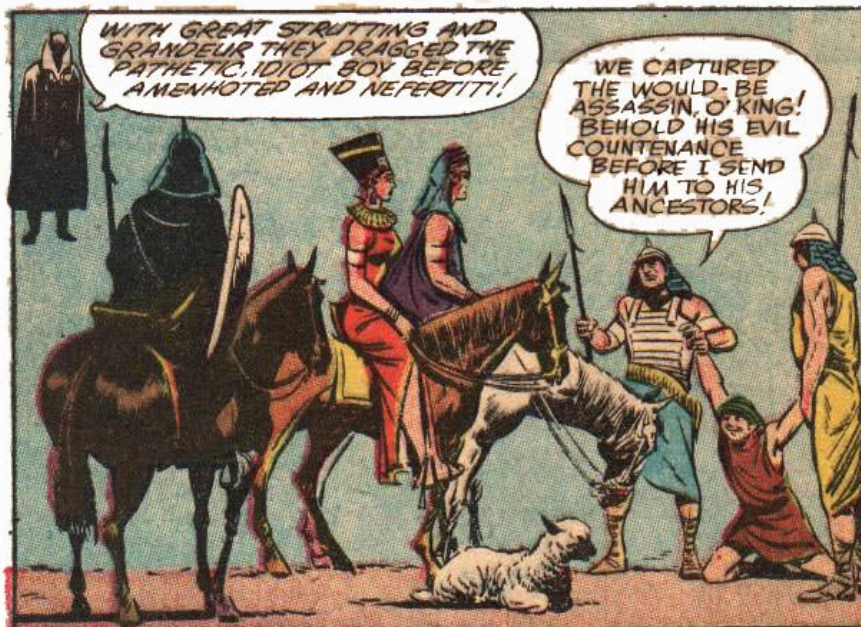
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AND THE GUARDS, ORDERED TO CAPTURE SOMEBODY AND FINDING THEIR QUARRY GONE, HAD TO PROTECT THEIR PROFESSIONAL REPUTATIONS BY BRINGING BACK SOMEONE... ANYONE... SO THEY POINCED ON THE HAPLESS SHEPHERD...

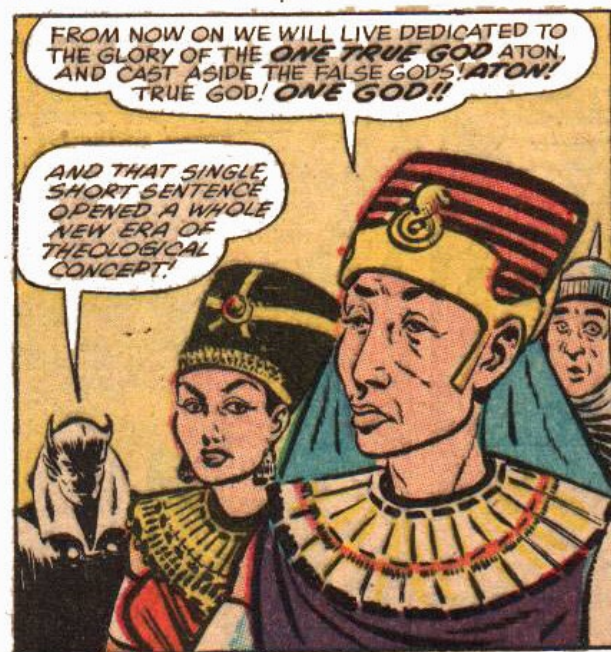


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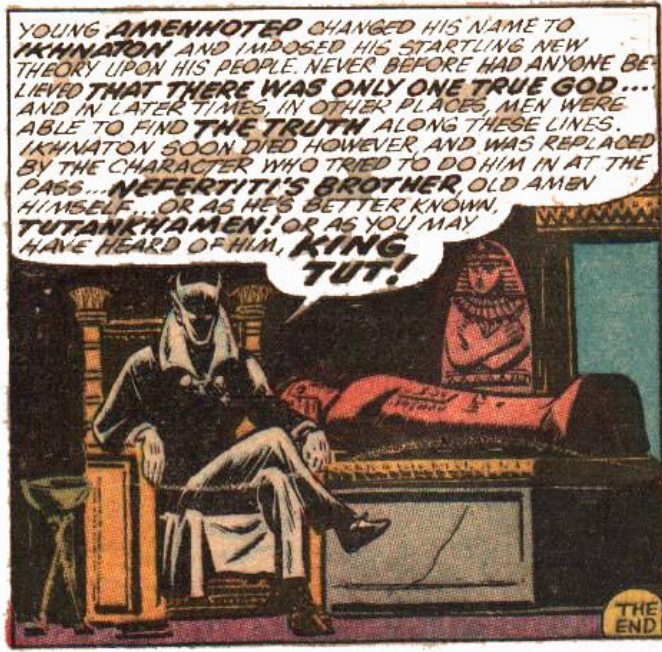


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THE END



THIS IS YOUR STORY-
TELLER, "FATE"...THE

MAN in BLACK

WE MAY HAVE MET MANY TIMES...CAN YOU
REMEMBER WHEN FATE INFLUENCED *YOUR* LIFE?
HMMM? OF COURSE YOU DO, FOR FATE IS EVERY-
WHERE AT ALL TIMES! THE MASTER CHESS
PLAYER GUIDING YOUR DESTINY LIKE A
PAWN ON THE CHECKERBOARD OF
LIFE WILL PROVE THE POINT...

MARCH No.4

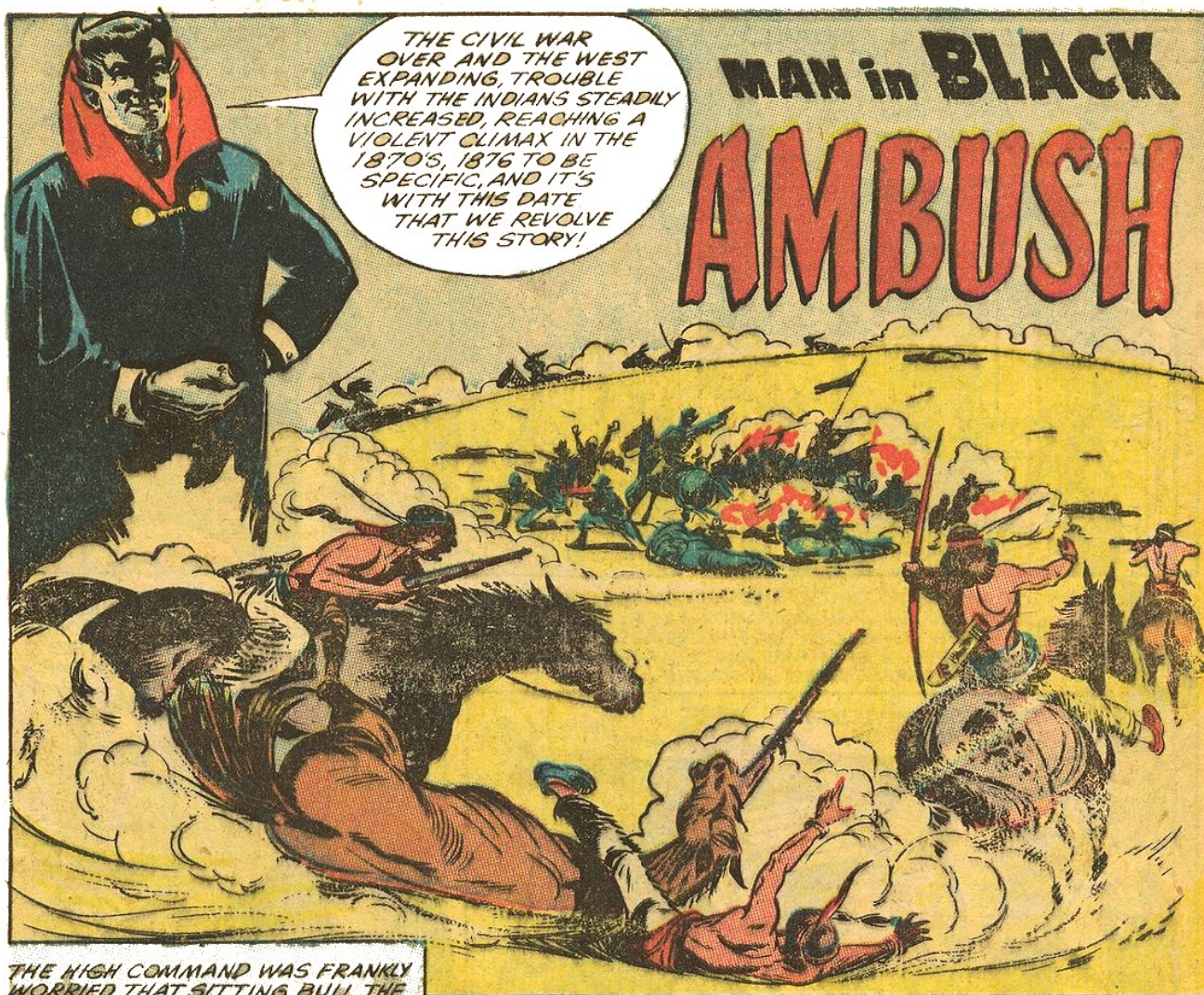
READ FOR YOURSELF
THE TRUE ACCOUNT OF
A FABULOUS TAME
EAGLE DURING THE
CIVIL WAR...

JOIN CUPID
AND VENUS IN
A CHARMING
LITTLE CHILLER
WHERE A KISS
IS THE INVITATION
TO DOOM...

SQUIRM WHILE THE
UNHAPPY JANITOR RISKS
HIS LIFE TO STEAL A
VALUABLE TREASURE...

THRILL
TO AN
ASTOUNDING
CHAIN OF
DRAMATIC
EVENTS IN
THIS TALE OF
THE WEST
WHEN OUR
COUNTRY WAS
YOUNG...

INTERESTED? WELL, THEN, COME ALONG WITH THE MAN IN BLACK!



THE CIVIL WAR OVER AND THE WEST EXPANDING, TROUBLE WITH THE INDIANS STEADILY INCREASED, REACHING A VIOLENT CLIMAX IN THE 1870'S, 1876 TO BE SPECIFIC, AND IT'S WITH THIS DATE THAT WE REVOLVE THIS STORY!

MAN in BLACK AMBUSH

THE HIGH COMMAND WAS FRANKLY WORRIED THAT SITTING BULL, THE GREAT CHIEF WAS PLANNING A MAJOR CAMPAIGN...

THEY NEEDED A COURIER, SO FATE FURNISHED THEM ONE!!

SEE? IF FATE HADN'T MADE THAT HORSE REAR, THEY'D NEVER HAVE SEEN INJUN SAM OUT IN THE YARD AND WOULDN'T HAVE THOUGHT OF IT!

WE'VE GOT TO FIND OUT HOW MANY BRAVES HE'S COLLECTED AND WHAT HE PLANS TO DO!

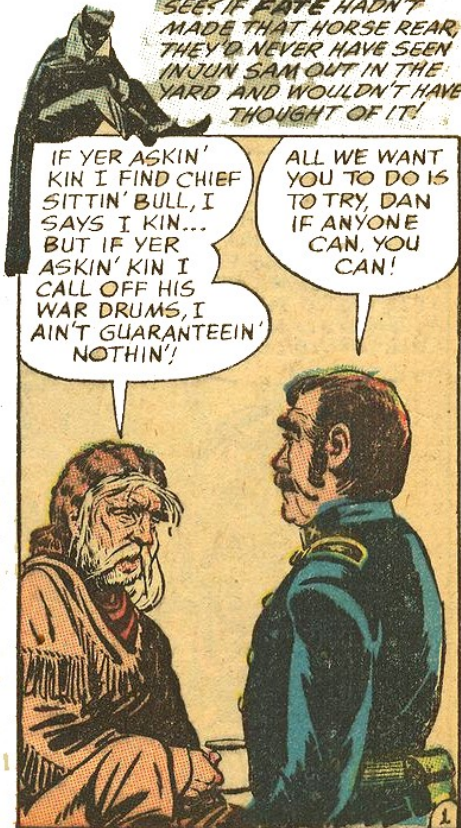
NO, HE'D ONLY HOLD YOU HOSTAGE! WE NEED SOMEONE THE CHIEF KNOWS AND TRUSTS!

I CAN GO, SIR!

WAIT! THERE HE IS!! THE VERY MAN WE NEED! INJUN DAN!

IF YER ASKIN' KIN I FIND CHIEF SITTIN' BULL, I SAYS I KIN... BUT IF YER ASKIN' KIN I CALL OFF HIS WAR DRUMS, I AIN'T GUARANTEEIN' NOTHIN'!

ALL WE WANT YOU TO DO IS TO TRY, DAN IF ANYONE CAN, YOU CAN!





WE'LL WAIT TILL NIGHTFALL, DAN, IF YOU'RE NOT BACK BY THEN, WE'LL BE FORCED TO MARCH! IT WAS KIND FATE THAT SENT YOU TO US AND MAYBE IT MEANS SUCCESS!

MMM... MAYBE... BUT FLATTERY WILL GET YOU NOWHERE, BUB! BUT ANYWAY, JUST THEN AT SITTING BULL'S VILLAGE A TRIO OF VERY SHADY CHARACTERS WERE CONCLUDING A FAST DEAL WITH THE CHIEF HIMSELF...



AGREED!

UGH!

C'MON! QUIT GABBIN' AFORE THEY FIND OUT ABOUT THEM GUNS! SAY GOODBYE AND LET'S GO!



SHUT UP, YOU FOOL! YOU NEVER HURRY AN INJUN! WAKAN TANKAH, CHIEF! GITCHI GOOMAH! UH!

OR WORDS TO THAT EFFECT— ANYWAY, SEVERAL HOURS LATER, INJUN DAN BLEW INTO THE VILLAGE SHOWN THE NEW GUNS, DAN WAS PROPERLY APPRECIATIVE WHEN SOMEHOW A FIRE TRIPOD MYSTERIOUSLY COLLAPSED, TRIPPING A SQUAW...



GIVE WORTHLESS YELLOW DUST SO VALUED BY WHITE MAN!

SIX SACKS OF GOLD?!



GREAT CHIEF, IF THET'S THE BULLETS FER THESE GUNS, YOU'VE BEEN HORN-SWOGGLED! THET'S PERCUSSION CAP STUFF!



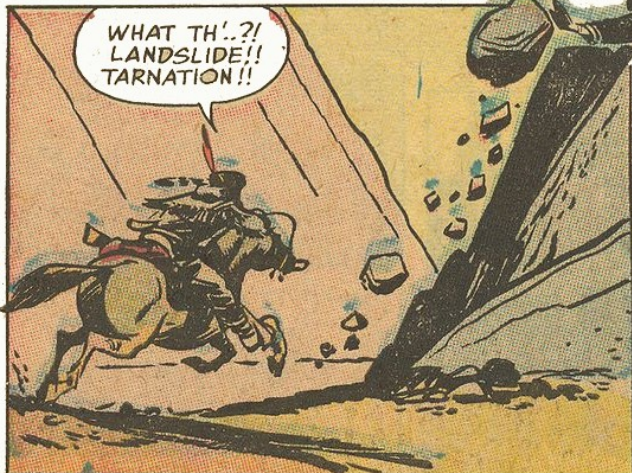
LOOKEE HERE, CHIEF! YER GUNS IS USELESS WITH THIS STUFF! Y'VEEN DONE IN GOOD! LISTEN! S'POSING THE ARMY CATCHES THESE VARMINTS AN TURNS 'EM OVER T'YA, IT'LL PROVE THEY'RE YER FRIENDS... AN' Y' KIN CALL OFF YER BRAVES!



YOU GO! TELL ARMY IF AGREE BRING BAD MEN TO CHIEF, CHIEF BELIEVE WHITE MAN FRIEND... ARMY NO AGREE, INDIAN TAKE WARPATH! HERE! WEAR FEATHER IN CAP... WILL GIVE SAFE PASSAGE-- YOU RETURN ANSWER BY SUNDOWN! UGH!

SUN--?!! JUMPIN' CATFISH, I'LL HAVE TO RIDE LIKE TH' FURY... AWRIGHT, CHIEF, GIMME TH' FEATHER! I'LL MAKE IT!

BUT INJUN DAN WAS NOT TO ACCOMPLISH HIS MISSION FOR FATE, TAKING A HAND, CAUSED AN AVALANCHE TO BLOCK THE ONLY PASS...



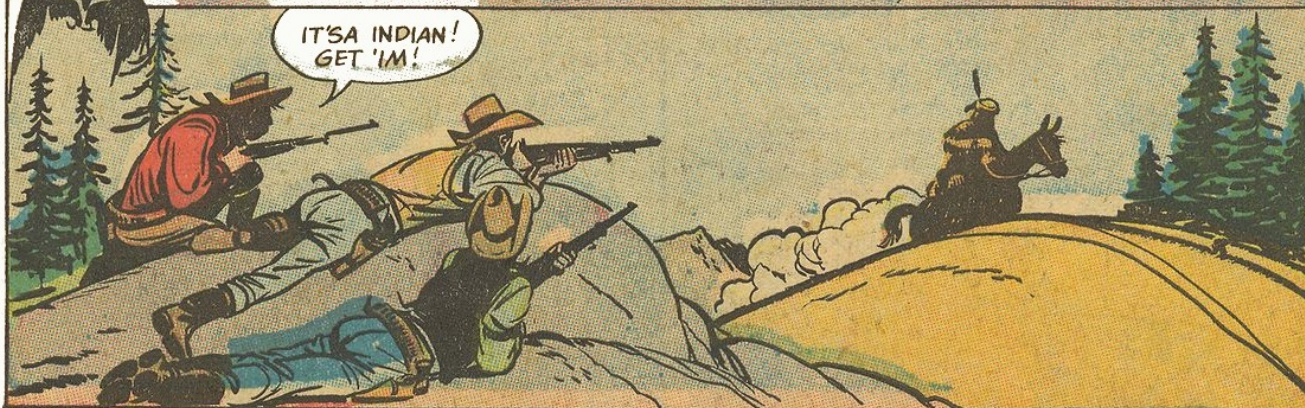
WHAT TH'...?!
LANDSLIDE!!
TARNATION!!



CONSARN, BLASTED LUCK! I'LL
HAVE TO HIE MYSELF ALL AWAY
AROUN' TH' MOUNTAIN! FATE
SHORE TRICKED ME A DIRTY
TRICK THET TIME!!

DIRTY TRICK? NO, INJUN DAN JUST YOUR
DESTINY... FOR HOW ELSE WOULD YOU
HAVE COME ACROSS THE THREE RENEGADES?

AND THE THREE OUTLAWS JUMPY THAT THE
INDIANS THEY HAD BILKED WERE FOLLOWING THEM.
TO GET REVENGE, WERE READY TO CUT DOWN ANY PURSUER.



IT'S A INDIAN!
GET 'IM!



THAT DAY INJUN
DAN MET HIS FATE.



HUH! 'TWARNT
NO INDIAN
AFTER ALL!
TOO BAD!

YEH... I
WONDER WHO
HE WAS? HUH!
NOBODY IMPORTANT,
THET'S SURE!



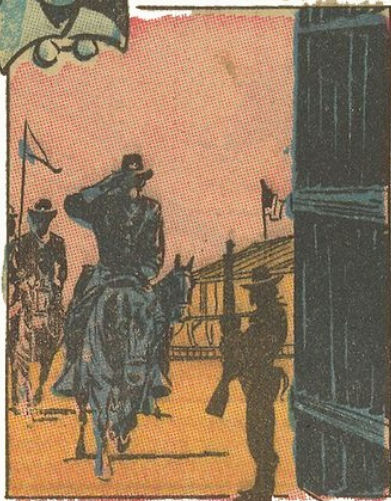
NO... NOBODY IMPORTANT...
JUST AN OLD SOURDOUGH
CARRYING A MESSAGE
THAT COULD HAVE PREVENTED
... BUT THAT'S LATER. NOW,
THE KEY ITEM WAS THAT
THE MESSAGE *WASN'T*
DELIVERED AND THAT THE
APPOINTED HOUR HAD
COME AND GONE...

MY COMPLIMENTS TO THE
GENERAL! HAVE HIM MOVE
OUT HIS TROOPS AND
FIND THAT INDIAN
VILLAGE!

YES, SIR!



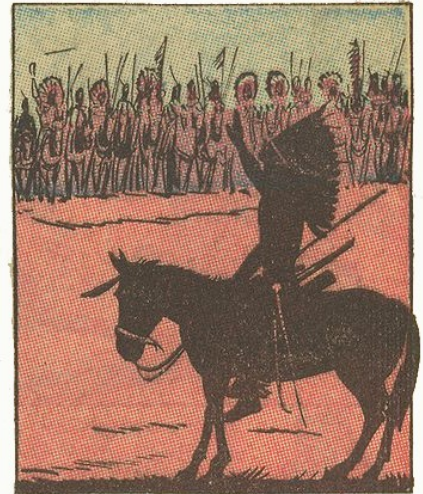
THE BUGLE SOUNDED... THE MEN SADDLED UP... THE CORDERS CRACKED OUT AND THE TROOPS LEFT THE FORT...



OLD SITTING BULL, MEANWHILE PRESSED ON BY THE MORE AVID OF HIS CHIEFS AND UNABLE TO EXTEND THE DEADLINE ANY LONGER, UTTERED A SOLEMN COMMAND...



SIX THOUSAND STRONG, THE INDIANS MOUNTED THEIR PONIES AND WITH THE RED RAYS OF SUNRISE GLEAMING BULLY ON THE SMEARED WAR PAINT, TURNED WEST TOWARDS THE RIVER...



THE NEXT MORNING THE THREE DESPERADOS WERE SUDDENLY AWAKENED BY A TWIG BEING BROKEN...

WHA--?! WAKE UP!

HMM?... WHA--?? WHU--? UH--?? HMM?



SOMEONE'S AROUND... I HEARD...

THERE! THERE THEY ARE! INDIANS!!



GET 'EM! SHOOT 'EM BEFO... UMMGH!



USING THE TRICKY DAWN LIGHT, ONE MAN WAS ABLE TO DUCK INTO THE UNDERBRUSH, FATE SCREENING HIM FROM THE INDIANS!...

WELL, THOSE REDSKINS WERE PRETTY ANXIOUS TO FIND THAT LAST RENEGADE SO THEY REALLY BEAT THRU THE BUSHES... ONE BRAVE PARTICULARLY WENT POKIN' AND JABBING SOMETHING FIERCE SO FATE HUNG OUT A LITTLE INSURANCE...



AND IT PAID OFF RIGHT QUICK, FOR JUST AS THE BRAVE WAS ABOUT TO POKE RIGHT WHERE THE RENEGADE WAS, FATE PUT THAT BEE HIVE RIGHT IN THE WAY OF THE UPSTROKE... AND THAT'S WHEN THE MOLASSES HIT THE FAN!



EVERYBODY TOOK OFF AT ONCE! THE INDIANS ONE WAY... THE BEES AFTER THEM... AND THE BADMAN IN THE OPPOSITE DIRECTION... AND THRU SOME OF THE ROUGHEST COUNTRY AROUND... BRUTALLY STUNG, ALMOST DEAD FROM FATIGUE AND THIRST HE WAS ABOUT TO GIVE UP WHEN TOPPING A SMALL RISE HE SAW A LOVELY SIGHT...



HIS IDENTITY UNKNOWN TO THE ARMY BOYS, OF COURSE HE WAS QUICKLY GIVEN SUCCOR...



...AND YOU SAY THE INDIANS ARE IN WAR PAINT, EH? SAY, YOU DIDN'T COME ACROSS AN OLD HALF-BREED CALLED DAN?!

UH...YEH...YEH... POOR CRITTER... TH' INJUNS GOT 'IM!



POOR DAN! WELL, I GUESS THAT'S OUR ANSWER! SITTING BULL WON'T LISTEN! IT'S WAR AGAIN!

YEH--YEH--HE'S ON TH' WARPATH ALL RIGHT THAT... WHUT Y'SAY HIS NAME WAS? SITTING BULL? SAY, COULD I HAVE SOME MORE COFFEE?

NOT NOW... THE GENERAL'S WAITIN' TO TALK TO YOU!



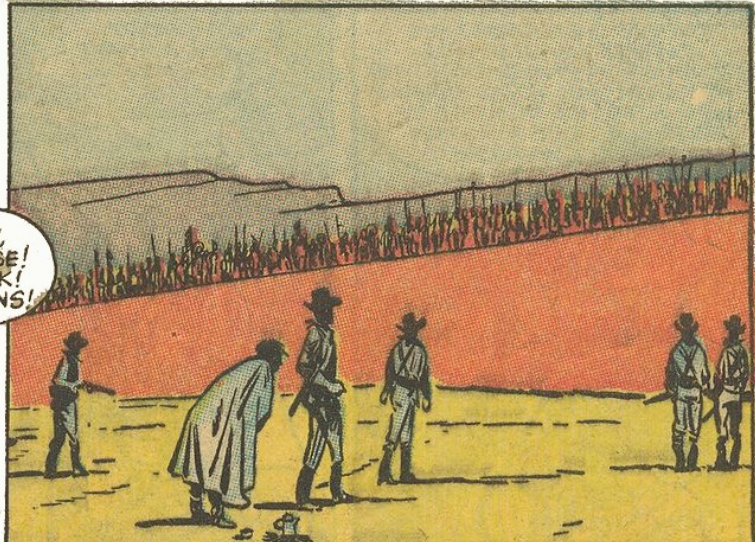
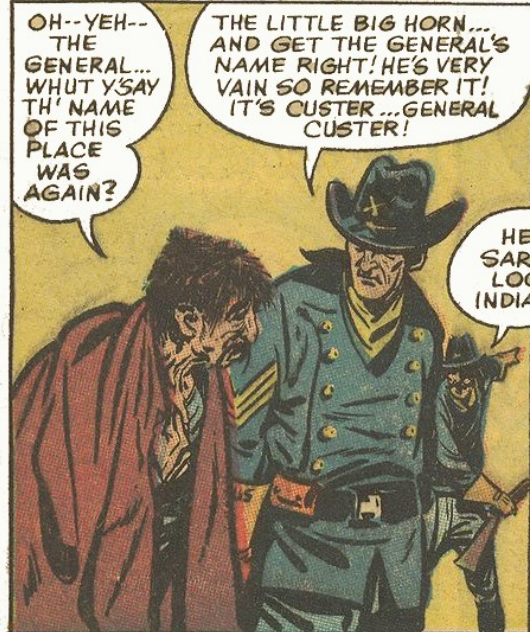
C--CAMP! AN ARMY CAMP! I--I'M SAFE!



OH--YEH--THE GENERAL... WHUT Y'SAY TH' NAME OF THIS PLACE WAS AGAIN?

THE LITTLE BIG HORN... AND GET THE GENERAL'S NAME RIGHT! HE'S VERY VAIN SO REMEMBER IT! IT'S CUSTER... GENERAL CUSTER!

HEY, SARGE! LOOK! INDIANS!



HISTORICAL NOTE: ON JUNE 25, 1876 AT LITTLE BIG HORN, 208 MEN, COMMANDED BY GENERAL CUSTER, WERE AMBUSHED BY APACHE INDIANS LED BY CHIEF SITTING BULL... THERE WERE NO WHITE SURVIVORS.

THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

PART 1

BROOM STRAWS- ONE SHORT, ONE LONG, JUST LIKE YOU USE THEM TO SETTLE SOMETHING SO DID THE ANCIENTS... **ONLY MORE SO!** AND JUST LIKE WE HAVE TODAY, THEY ALSO HAD THEIR **SUPERSTITIONS, DISCRIMINATIONS AND PREJUDICES... ONLY MORE SO!**



NO, SLAVES! SEE WHAT THE MASTER HAS SENT FROM GREECE TO LEND ANOTHER HAND FOR THY LABORS!

THE DEVIL'S OWN!

...WITH AN **EVIL EYE!**

A HUNCH-BACK!



THE TEST! GIVE HIM THE TEST!

YES! THE TEST! IF HE IS **NOT** EVIL HE WILL CHOOSE RIGHTLY!

THE STRAWS! GET THE STRAWS AND LAMP! LET US SEE IF HE IS POSSESSED OF THE DEVIL!



ONE SHORT, ONE LONG STRAW ONE IN EACH END... PICK THE LONG AND YOU PROVE YOU ARE NOT EVIL... **BUT PICK THE SHORT AND...! KNOW YOU THE PENALTY!?**

I KNOW.



BUT WE'VE NO **RIGHT!** WE MUST WAIT UNTIL THE MASTER RETURNS!

SILENCE! THE MASTER WILL PRAISE AND THANK US FOR CLEANSING HIS DOMICILE OF THIS EVIL ONE! **CHOOSE!**



THE SHORT STRAW! HE IS **EVIL!** HE **MUST DIE!**



AND SO, BECAUSE HE WAS A **HUNCHBACK** AND THEY WERE **SUPERSTITIOUS AND FRIGHTENED**, THEY KILLED HIM...OR THEY WOULD HAVE IF THE MASTER HAD **STAYED AWAY**, BUT **FATE**, MY FRIENDS, HAD OTHER PLANS...



THIS IS HOW IT MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED

PART 2

NOW THIS HERE IS A NAIL... A HORSE SHOE NAIL... AND BECAUSE OF THIS NAIL THIS IS WHAT REALLY HAPPENED! ALL THINGS BEING THE SAME AS BEFORE LET'S TAKE UP THE STORY AGAIN...



BUT WE'VE NO RIGHT! WE MUST WAIT UNTIL THE MASTER RETURNS!

SILENCE! THE MASTER WILL PRAISE AND THANK US FOR THIS! CHOOSE, EVIL ONE! CHOOSE!!



BUT AS ADVERTISED, FATE WAS TO TAKE A HAND AND ABOUT NOW WAS THE TIME TO COLLECT THAT NAIL!



IS SOMETHING THE MATTER, MASTER?

FICKLE GOD OF FATE! MY HORSE HAS THROWN A SHOE! WE MUST RETURN HOME!



NEAT, EH? WELL, THE MASTER WENT HOME AND WHEN HE WALKED IN--!!

WHAT IN THE NAME OF ZEUS IS GOING ON?!

THE MASTER!



THE CHOOSING OF STRAWS! A BLIND SUPERSTITIOUS RITE! HOW DARE YOU PRACTICE THESE ABOMINATIONS IN THIS HOUSE? GROSS, STUPID PREJUDICE! I FORBID IT!!



I BOUGHT THIS MAN FOR HIS MIND ... NOT FOR HIS BODY, PREJUDICED DOLTS! I WILL HAVE YOU ALL PUT TO THE SWORD!



AND THUS THIS WISE MASTER SAVED FOR THE WORLD ONE OF THE GREATEST STORY TELLERS OF ALL TIME... FOR THIS ONE-EYED HUNCHBACK WHO WAS EVENTUALLY FREED AND INVITED TO LIVE AT THE COURT OF KING CROESUS WAS NONE OTHER THAN THAT GREAT AUTHOR OF FABLES, AESOP!



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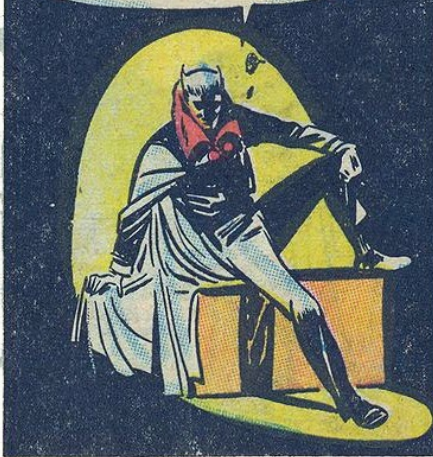
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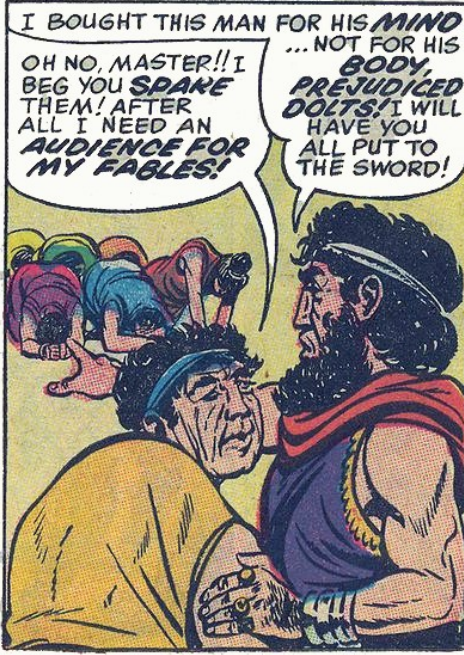
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I BOUGHT THIS MAN FOR HIS **MIND**

OH NO, MASTER!! I BEG YOU **SPARE** THEM! AFTER ALL I NEED AN **AUDIENCE FOR MY FABLES!**

...NOT FOR HIS **BODY, PREJUDICED DOLTS!** I WILL HAVE YOU ALL PUT TO THE SWORD!



AND THUS THIS WISE MASTER SAVED FOR THE WORLD ONE OF THE **GREATEST STORY TELLERS** OF ALL TIME... FOR THIS ONE-EYED HUNCHBACK WHO WAS EVENTUALLY FREED AND INVITED TO LIVE AT THE COURT OF KING **CROESUS**, WAS NONE OTHER THAN THAT GREAT AUTHOR OF FABLES, **AESOP!**





AN ORPHANED, STARVING EAGLET, AN INDIAN'S NEW AXE AND A TREE START OUR YARN. AND FATE BRINGS THEM TOGETHER.



AXE MEETS TREE...TREE FALLS DOWN...AND LITTLE EAGLET FALLS OUT...



...AND INTO THE ARMS OF A STARTLED INDIAN NAMED BLUE SKY...



FATE HAD BROUGHT BLUE SKY THIS HELP-LESS BIT OF LIFE, SO TRUE TO INDIAN TRADITION, BLUE SKY WOULD CARE FOR AND NURTURE IT...



...AND BLUE SKY DID CARE FOR IT... BUT **FATE** HAD OTHER PLANS FOR THE BIRD AND ONE DAY PUT THE WHEELS IN MOTION TO CARRY THEM OUT...



OR RATHER PUT THE WHEELS **OUT** OF MOTION BY CAUSING A LOOSE STICK TO ENTANGLE ITSELF IN THE REAR WHEEL OF A FARMER'S WAGON...



ALREADY WEAK, THE SPOKES SNAPPED AND THE WHEEL COLLAPSED...



BLAST IT! I'VE GOT TO GET MY CORN TO MARKET TODAY... MAYBE **BLUE SKY** HAS AN EXTRY WHEEL!



AND THAT'S HOW **FATE** LED HIM TO THE INDIAN'S CAMP...



THANKS, BLUE SKY... SAY, WHERE'D YOU GET THE BIRD?

BLUE SKY FIND... **WILL SELL... TEN BUSHEL CORN!**

WELL... THEY SETTLED FOR FIVE BUSHEL AND THE FARMER TOOK THE EAGLET AND ALL WAS PEACE WITH THE WORLD...



WAS IS RIGHT, **FATE!**

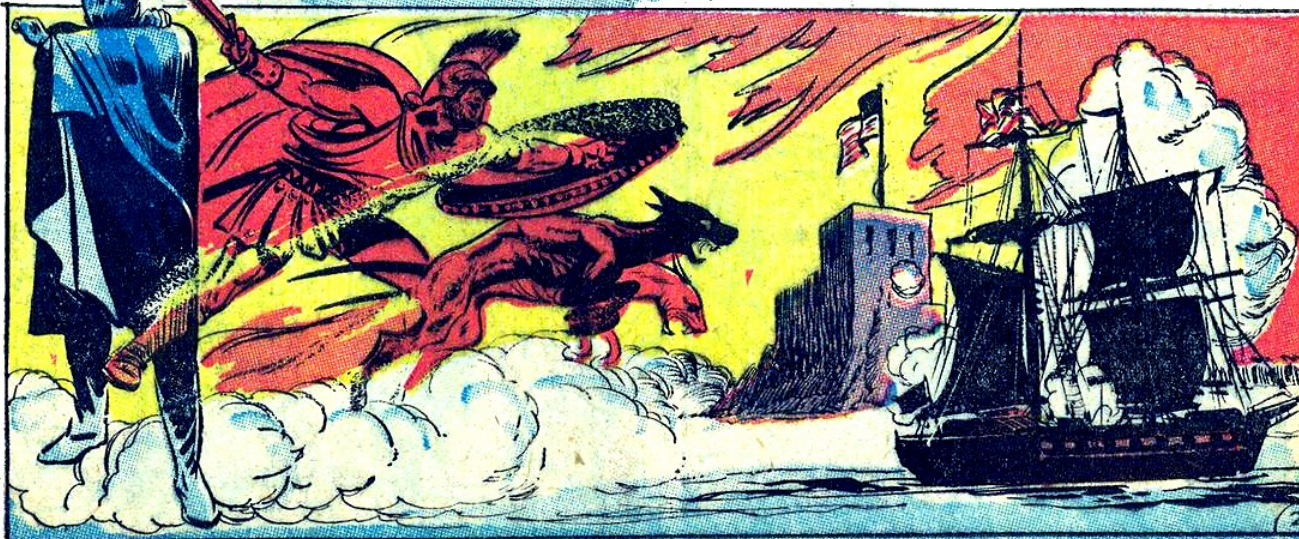
MARS! IS IT TIME ALREADY TO LOOSE YOUR **DOGS OF WAR?**



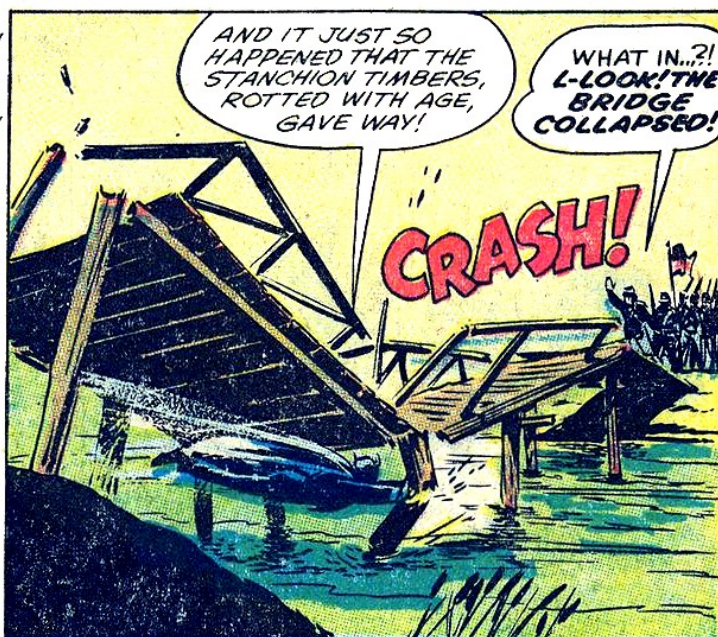
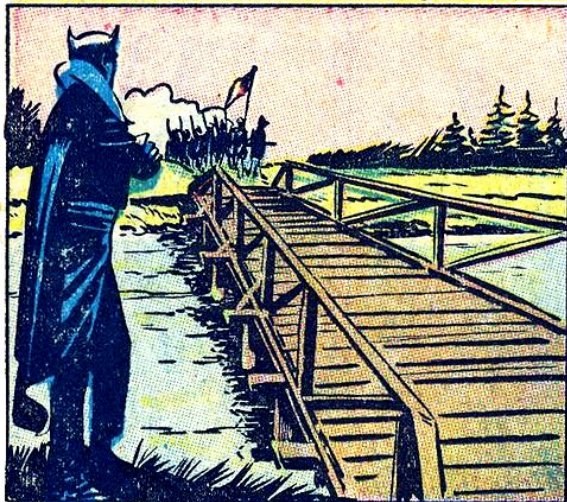
AYE! THE **WEAVER'S** THREADS HAVE CROSSED, **FATE**, AND OUR ROLES MUST BE PLAYED!

THUS, IN A COUNTRY TORN ASUNDER BY IDEOLOGICAL TENSIONS, A SHOT WAS FIRED IN ANGER AT FORT SUMTER

ON APRIL 12, 1861 AND A COMMON PEOPLE, WITH A COMMON HERITAGE, FOUGHT...



THEN, SOMETIME LATER, FATE DECREED THAT THE EAGLE WAS TO PASS INTO THE POSSESSION OF A SOLDIER...ONE OF THOSE COMING UP THE ROAD... BUT HOW TO GET THE SOLDIER PAST THE FARMER'S HOUSE? THIS WAY HE'LL MISS IT COMPLETELY...HE MUST BE DIVERTED!



AND IT JUST SO HAPPENED THAT THE STANCHION TIMBERS, ROTTED WITH AGE, GAVE WAY!

WHAT IN...?!
L-LOOK! THE BRIDGE COLLAPSED!

CRASH!

WHEW! FATE GAVE US A BREAK THIS TIME! IF WE'D BEEN ON THE BRIDGE WHEN IT BROKE WE'D BE GONERS! BUT **NOW** WHERE DO WE GO?!

WE CAN FORD THE RIVER DOWN THE ROAD A PIECE... I KNOW! I USED TO LIVE AROUND HERE!



HEY THERE, NEIGHBOR! FIXIN' TO SHOOT YOURSELF A CHICKEN DINNER?!

WHA...? WHY, IT'S JIMMY MCGINNIS! HOWDY, BOY!



THIS HERE'S NO CHICKEN, SON! THIS IS AN **EAGLE!** BUT IT'S BEEN FEELIN' RIGHT POORLY AN' MUCH AS I HATE TO, I FEEL TH' HUMAN THING TO DO IS PUT IT OUT OF ITS MISERY... I TRIED EVERYTHIN' ELSE!



I HAS ME A WAY WITH ANIMALS AN' I BET I COULD SAVE THIS POOR CRITTER... I'D HAVE TO BE TAKIN' HIM WITH ME, THOUGH... WOULD YOU BE AFTER SELLIN' HIM, NEIGHBOR?

WELL... I GAVE OL' INJUN BLUE SKY FIVE BUSHEL OF CORN FOR IT.. GIVE ME TWO-FIFTY FOR THEM AN' IT'S YOURS!



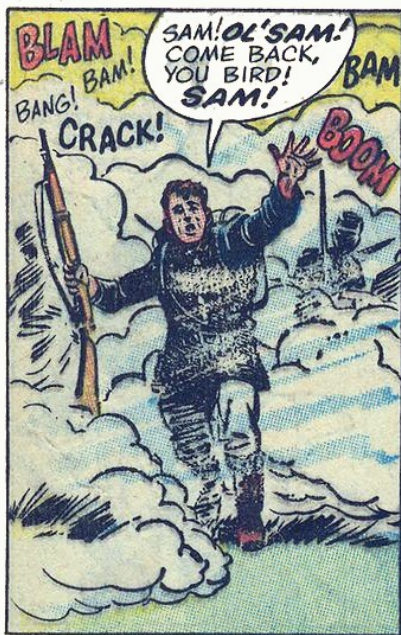
SO FATE ARRANGED FOR JIMMY MCGINNIS AND THE EAGLE TO FIND EACH OTHER. UNDER JIM'S EXPERT DOCTORING, THE EAGLE, DUBBED "**OLD SAM**", THRIVED. SOON, IT WAS FOLLOWING MCGINNIS AROUND CAMP LIKE A FAITHFUL DOG!

STOP **SCREECHING** AT ME! I'LL HAVE YOUR **NEW PERCH** DONE IN A LITTLE WHILE!



FATE GAVE THAT BIRD A CHARMED LIFE AND AS AN EXAMPLE, IN THE FIRST BATTLE AN OIL CASK JUST HAPPENED TO SPLIT...





SAM! OL' SAM!
COME BACK,
YOU BIRD!
SAM!

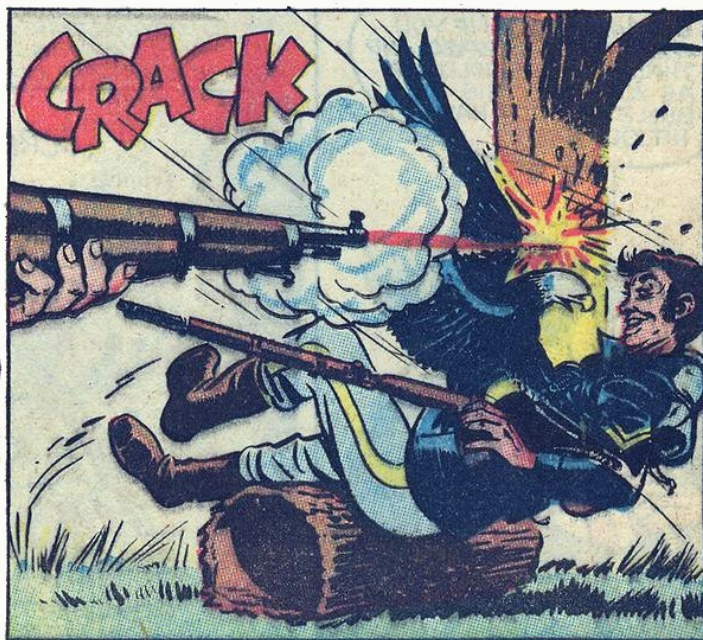


ALL THIS SMOKE AND
DUST! I CAN'T SEE A
BLESSED THING! SAM!
SA-- AW, WHAT'S TH'
USE? HE'S GONE!!

HEARTBROKEN, TIRED AND CONFUSED,
JIM SANK WEARILY ON A LOG...RIGHT
IN A SNIPER'S LINE OF FIRE!



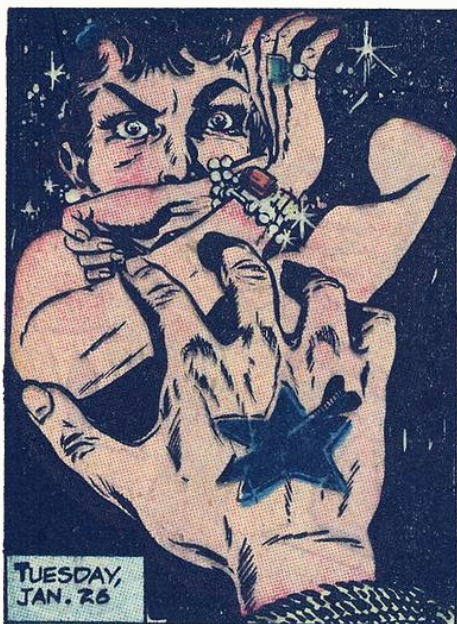
SO FATE AGAIN TOOK A
HAND...OR RATHER A MOUTH...
AND BLEW A HOLE IN THE
SMOG...JUST AS OLD SAM
HAPPENED TO BE FLYING
OVERHEAD...



WAL AH'LL BE HORNSWOGGLED! THEM TWO
KNOW EACH OTHER! AN EAGLE! KISSIN' 'IM!
WAL, SHUCKS! AH AIN'T
'BOUT TO BREAK THAT
FRIENDSHIP UP!
NOSIREE! NOT
ME!

OLD SAM WAS NEVER TIED UP AGAIN
AND DURING ALL TWENTY-TWO
BATTLES HE WAS THROUGH, HE
CIRCLED OVERHEAD SCREAMING AWAY!
AFTER THE WAR HE LIVED IN THE STATE
CAPITOL IN MADISON, WISCONSIN
FOR FIFTEEN YEARS. THEN JIM MCGINNIS
TOOK HIM ON AN EXHIBITION TOUR
UNTIL 1881. THAT YEAR OLD SAM
DIED...THE LIVING PERSONIFICATION
OF OUR COINS AND EMBLEMS THAT
FATE GAVE A CHARMED LIFE!

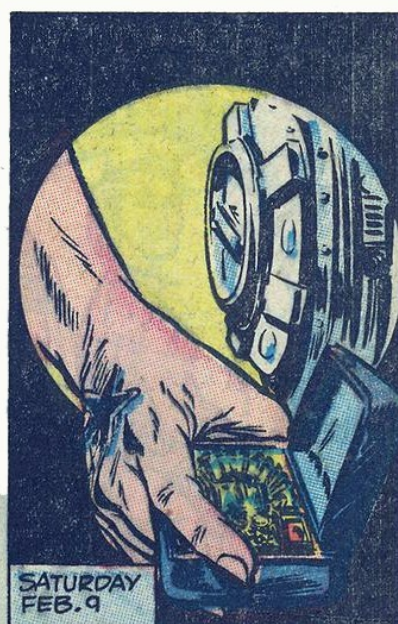




TUESDAY,
JAN. 26



SUNDAY
FEB. 3



SATURDAY
FEB. 9

MAN in BLACK the THIEF!

ALLRIGHT MR. MAN-IN-BLACK, HERE'S THE PITCH... A FABULOUS DIAMOND, TWO VERY INTERESTED PEOPLE, ONE OF THEM A DETECTIVE... THE OTHER A JEWEL THIEF! YOU'RE TO BRING THEM TOGETHER 'ACCIDENTALLY'. I'M DOING THIS TO TEST DUTY... HE HASN'T BEEN VERY CONCIENTIOUS LATELY! SEE THAT HE MINDS HIS P'S AND Q'S!

OKAY, WEAVER! AS LONG AS VENUS AND HER LITTLE GOON PLAYMATE, CUPID, KEEP AWAY IT'LL BE NO PROBLEM!



HOO HA! DID YOU HEAR WHAT THE MAN-IN-BLACK SAID ABOUT US!?

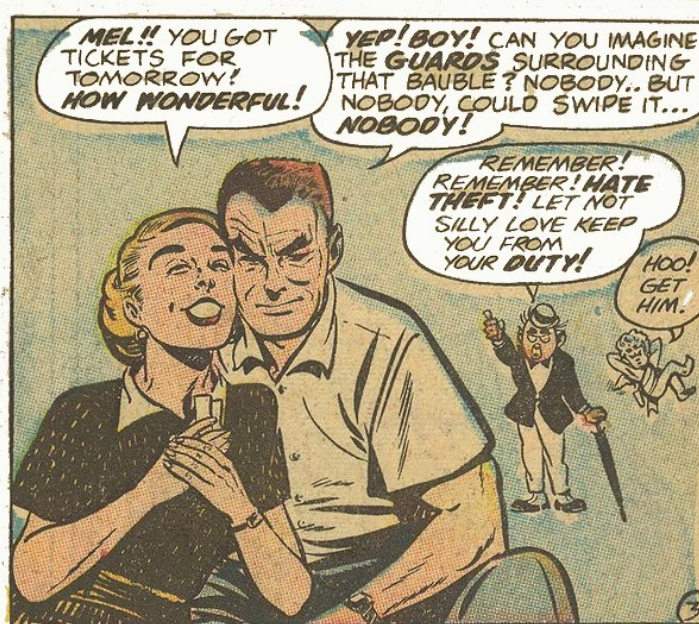
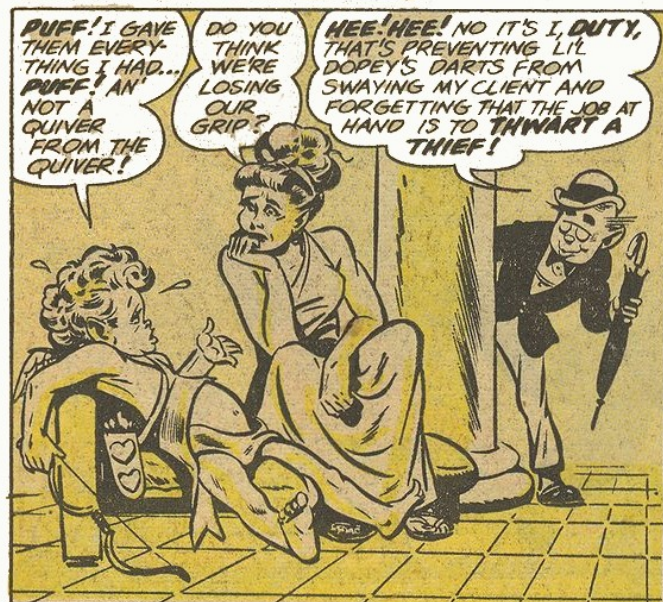
YEH! I OUGHTA POP IM ON THE NOGGIN! GOON, AM I? I'LL FIX HIS WAGON!

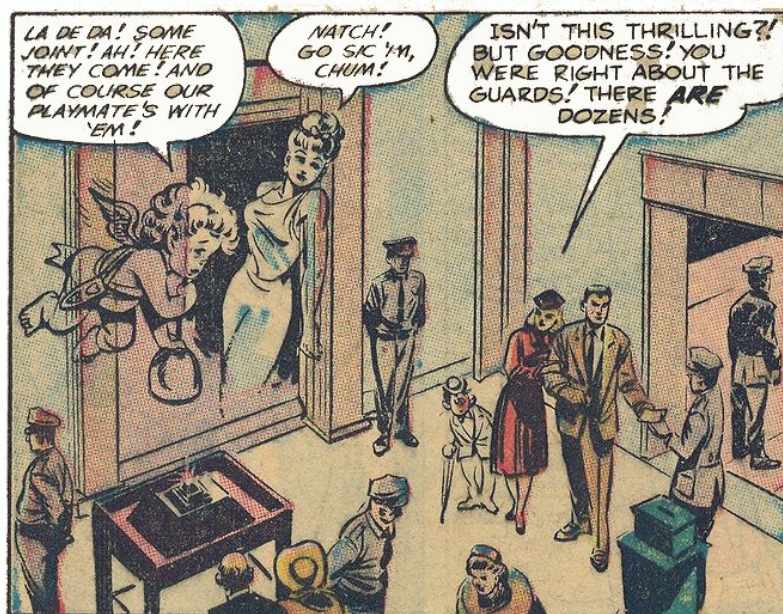
LET'S FIX ALL THEIR WAGONS! IF WE CAN MAKE THE DETECTIVE FALL FOR THE THIEF THEN THE ROBBERY'LL TAKE PLACE AND FATE AND DUTY...

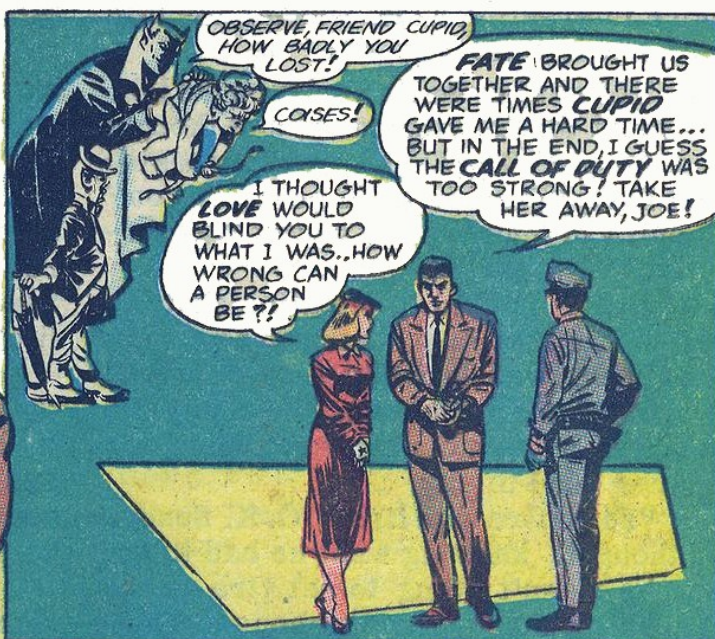
HEE!HEE!! OH, BOY!! OL' WEAVER HONEY WILL FLIP HER TOP KNOT! HOO!HOO! BOY!! LET'S GO!!



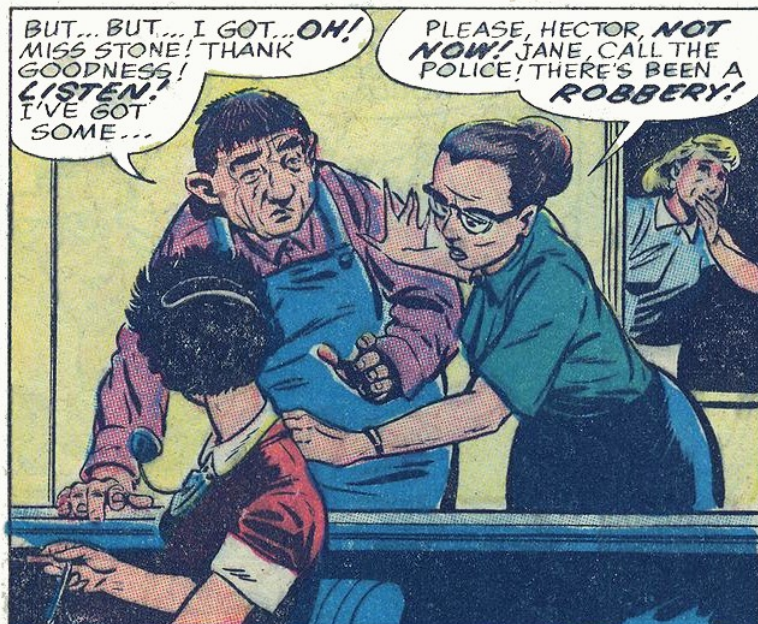
















NOW TO GET AWAY... MEXICO CITY... THAT'S WHERE I'LL GO...

HEY! YOU THERE!



HOW DO WE GET UPSTAIRS, JACK? THAT WAY?

UH... OH... YEH... DOWN TH' HALL...



BOY! THERE'S A LIVE ONE... WELL, LET'S GO!



SOME MINUTES LATER—

HERE THEY ARE, SIR!

GOOD GRIEF! ARE THEY HURT?!

NAW... THEY'LL BE OKAY... JUST KNOCKED OUT!



THE CONTAINER! EMPTY! DID YOU SEE THE CAPSULES THIS BOX CONTAINED? THEY'RE INVALUABLE!

WAIT A MINUTE! WHEN WE CAME IN A JANITOR WAS TAKING OUT A TRASH CAN... D'YOU THINK HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN TAKING SOMETHING ELSE OUT TOO?!

Y--YES, HECTOR... TOOK THEM!



AND SOME MINUTES AFTER THAT...

ALMOST... ALMOST FREE... IF I CAN GET BY HERE...



YOU, THERE! HOLD IT! STOP, I SAY!

!?!?



YOU CAN'T GET AWAY WITH THAT... EXCUSE ME, SIR!... MADAM, ANIMALS CANNOT BE TAKEN INTO THE CABIN!... PLEASE, SIR, MIND MOVING ON?... NOW, MADAM...

THEY TOLD ME...



FINALLY! NOW IF I CAN GET BY THIS DAME I'LL HAVE IT MADE....!



OH! JUST A MINUTE, SIR! SIR!



THAT'S A PRETTY LARGE SUITCASE, SIR...LET ME STORE IT BACK HERE... I'M SURE YOU'LL BE MUCH MORE COMFORTABLE!

UH-T-THANKS.

AND THEN, AT LONG, LONG LAST THE PLANE STARTS ITS ENGINES, CLEARS THE TOWER AND TAKES OFF...



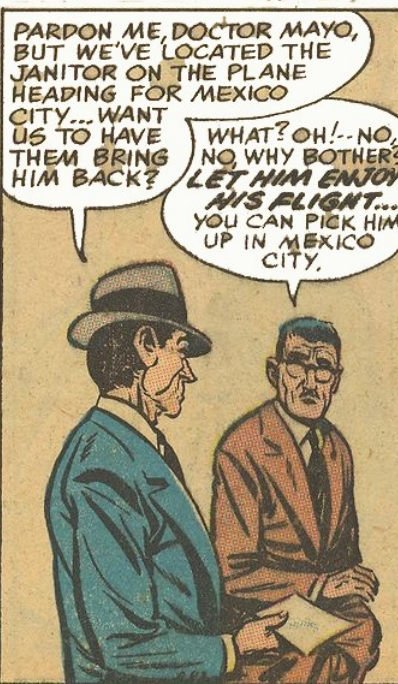
WELL... WE'RE OFF... YOU LOOK PARTICULARLY HAPPY ABOUT IT, YOUNG MAN!

HUH? YEH...YEN! I AM! I'M ON MY WAY TO MY FORTUNE, LADY, AND NOTHIN'... BUT NOTHIN' CAN STOP ME NOW!!



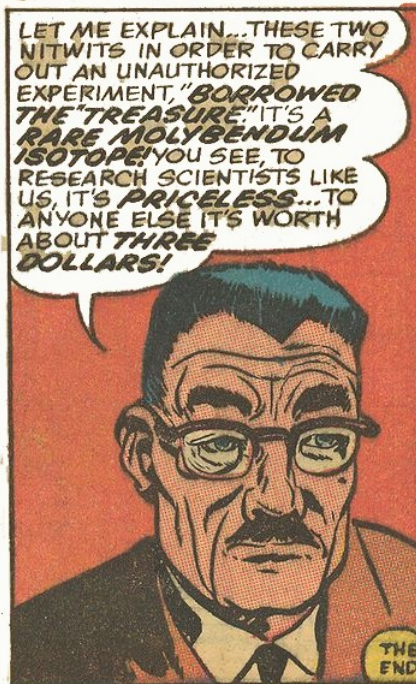
... IF YOU HAD LET US GO AHEAD, WE WOULDN'T HAVE TAKEN IT!

FOR TWO MEMBERS OF MY BRILLIANT STAFF YOU SURE ACTED STUPIDLY! YOU KNEW HOW VALUABLE IT WAS! YOU KNEW THAT...



PARDON ME, DOCTOR MAYO, BUT WE'VE LOCATED THE JANITOR ON THE PLANE HEADING FOR MEXICO CITY... WANT US TO HAVE THEM BRING HIM BACK?

WHAT? OH!--NO, NO WHY BOTHER? LET HIM ENJOY HIS FLIGHT... YOU CAN PICK HIM UP IN MEXICO CITY.



LET ME EXPLAIN...THESE TWO NITWITS IN ORDER TO CARRY OUT AN UNAUTHORIZED EXPERIMENT, "BORROWED THE TREASURE" IT'S A RARE MOLYBDENUM ISOTOPE! YOU SEE, TO RESEARCH SCIENTISTS LIKE US, IT'S PRICELESS...TO ANYONE ELSE IT'S WORTH ABOUT THREE DOLLARS!

THE END

ALFRED HARVEY PRESENTS

the MAN in BLACK

No. 1

GOOD EVENING!
I AM MR. TWILIGHT,
YOUR STORY TELLER--
THE MAN IN BLACK!
BEFORE I BEGIN I WANT
TO APOLOGIZE FOR ALWAYS
KEEPING MY FACE IN THE SHADOWS!
BUT IT'S QUITE NECESSARY AS
ONE LOOK AT MY FACE IS
FATAL! YOU'VE SEEN I'M--
DEATH!!

\$2.00

RECOLLECTIONS

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EXTRA!

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